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The Week

THE Italian-Ethiopian dispute continued last week to dominate the field of international affairs. The formal inquiry into the Ualual incident came to its close, and officials in all countries marked time, waiting for the League Council to convene early in September. Throughout Europe, however, no informed observer could be found who believed that the Council would take any effective action to stop Italy. Less and less is heard about the application of League "sanctions"—a polite name for boycott and blockade. The British began moving ships and troops into the Mediterranean area even as His Majesty's government began to take a more conciliatory attitude. The most startling international event of the week was the American note to the Russian government threatening "most serious consequences" unless Moscow compels the Third International to abstain from Communist propaganda in this country. The press reported that Japan was about to make a similar protest. In Germany the extremists seemed more than ever in the saddle, and a wave of Jew-baiting was the Nazis' only answer to Dr. Schacht's timely warning that the economic boycott abroad, produced by anti-Semitism in the Reich, was augmenting the seriousness of Germany's almost hopeless economic position.

FEVERISH activity in Washington as Congress sought to crowd three months' work into a week dominated the domestic scene during the past seven days. The fight over the government's cotton loans delayed adjournment by three days. Before it started, however, Congress had adopted in a few hours a mass of important legislation which in nearly every case was botched by the effort to obtain a workable political compromise in a ridiculously short period of time. First in importance on the list comes the neutrality legislation, followed by the tax bill, the bill regulating utility holding companies and that prohibiting suits against the government because of its repudiation of the "gold clause" in its obligations. The bill amending the A.A.A. was also passed, as was the bank bill, the new Tennessee Valley Authority measure and the Guffey bill regulating the coal industry. The other chief measures of the session, passed earlier, are of course the social-security law, the Wagner labor-relations law and the appropriation of $4,000,000,000 for work relief.

THE neutrality resolution is a temporary measure that expires in six months. President Roosevelt wanted a measure enabling him to pick and choose among the participants in a war, putting an embargo on shipments only to countries he deemed guilty of "aggression"—a policy that would probably get us into a war even more quickly and surely than would no legislation at all. Instead, at the beginning of a war or during its course—a curious and ominous phrase—the President is to put an embargo on arms, ammunition or implements of war to all belligerents, extending this to other countries if and when they join the fray. American vessels are not to be used to transport such goods, nor shall American citizens travel in war zones except at their own risk. Manufacturers, importers and exporters of munitions will be licensed and

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their actions supervised by a Munitions Control Board. There is no definition of "instruments of war" and nothing is said about whether raw materials such as copper, cotton, steel and chemicals shall be included in the presidential embargo. Apparently, they shall not. Nothing is said, either, about loans to belligerents, although recent revelations, such as the famous Page cablegram and the Lansing letter, have shown the tremendous importance of financial ties in bringing America into the European conflict in 1917. In short, the neutrality resolution is an object lesson in the difficulties, pointed out by George Soule in The New Republic of August 21, of trying to keep out of war. Its chief value, and perhaps its only value, is that it does definitely register the desire of the American government, at this time and without any serious reckoning of the cost of alternative policies, to avoid entanglement.

THE facts in the great dispute over cotton that postponed the adjournment of Congress seventy-two hours are fairly clear and they reflect little credit on the Senators and Representatives from the South. In the recent past, the government has been lending twelve cents a pound on cotton. In effect this meant buying cotton at that rate and stabilizing the internal price accordingly. Twelve cents is well above the world price, and this situation has resulted in a tremendous reduction of American exports and a corresponding encouragement of cotton growing elsewhere—notably in Brazil. In order to make exports again possible, and to prevent the accumulation of even greater stocks in its own hands than it already holds, the government proposed to cut the domestic price to nine cents, compensating the growers in other ways so that the net return to them would be the same. This, however, the Southern bloc in Congress refused to accept. The bloc wanted maintenance of the full twelve-cent rate, in spite of its disastrous effect on exports and the terrific drain on the Treasury that it involved, especially through the accumulation of vast stocks of unsalable, high-priced cotton. As usual, the situation was resolved by means of a compromise. The government-loan rate, and therefore the internal price, will be ten cents a pound. This is not as bad as a twelve-cent price, but it is likely to hamper exports severely. The cotton bloc by its attitude took a long step backward from planning (however limited and temporary the character of such planning may be); and the step it took was a step toward the pork barrel.

IT IS probably a mistake to take Secretary Hull's note to Russia in too tragic a fashion. Obviously our present form of government is in no danger from propaganda from Moscow, and Mr. Hull's note, in consequence, reflects no real tension between the two governments. In our opinion, the amazingly harsh tone of the note can be accounted for by the following factors:

1. Pressure on Mr. Roosevelt from the AF. of L., Mr. Hearst, et al, to make a conspicuous anti-communist gesture. A.F. of L. leaders now regularly call their rivals Communists, and hope that a good ringing declaration from Mr. Roosevelt will help them to cling to their jobs.

2. Alarm in the Democratic Party at the praise accorded Mr. Roosevelt by Dimitroff, newly elected head of the Comintern. Dimitroff's praise was not exactly ardent. He merely said that Mr. Roosevelt was less an enemy of the workers than his reactionary, big-business opposition. However, Democratic strategists are reported to fear that this soon will be twisted into the statement that Mr. Roosevelt was hailed as comrade.

3. Pique felt by both Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hull at the failure of last winter's debt negotiations. Undoubtedly Mr. Roosevelt hoped that his recognition of Russia would be a great diplomatic coup. In fact, it has been a succession of political headaches.

4. Disappointment, in and out of the administration, at the failure of Russia to make large purchases in the American market.

ALTHOUGH these factors explain the note, they do not, of course, excuse it. Russia was under no obligation to accept a needlessly disadvantageous debt settlement, nor is it under any obligation now to buy American goods if better terms are offered in London and Paris. Mr. Hull's note made no allegations of increased communist activities in the United States resulting from the recognition of Russia, and he could not have made them, for there is no evidence that any such increase has occurred. By protesting the speeches of the American delegates to the Comintern meeting, Mr. Hull merely succeeded in making this country look silly. The speeches were equivalent to those made every day in this country at sales conventions, where individual salesmen arise and dilate on the customers "contacted," and the big orders in prospect, and deserve to be taken no more seriously. Fortunately, however, the indication is that, having made a protest for the record, the administration intends to pursue the matter no further.

IT IS impossible, in the limited time at our disposal, to discuss intelligently all the details of the mass of important legislation passed by Congress in its closing hours, but certain broad principles may be noted. The final form of the utility holding-company bill is somewhat stronger than seemed likely a week ago. Third-degree holding companies are abolished; second-degree companies must prove their right to exist, and all holding companies will be confined to control of single integrated systems or groups of small operating companies all in one region. This solution is about half way between what President Roosevelt originally wanted, and nothing at all. As in so many other instances of recent legislation, it is more important for the principle enunciated—in this case, that of federal regulation of corporate organizations in the public-utility field—than for any immediate effect. The new law

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will be tested in the courts, and it is far from certain that the Supreme Court will sustain it.

THE tax law is another political compromise of negligible importance both from the standpoint of revenue raised and social policy illustrated. It will probably result in revenues of about $275,000,000 annually, which may be compared with government expenses now running around $8,000,000,000. The inheritance-tax proposal failed of enactment, but estate taxes are provided, beginning at 2 percent on $40,000 and ranging up to 70 percent on that part of any estate above $50,000,000. Gift taxes will be about 75 percent as large as those on estates. The new surtaxes rise to 75 percent on that part of income in excess of $5,000,000. The corporation tax, instead of being 13.75 percent, is on a sliding scale from 12.5 to 15 percent. The capital-stock tax is increased by 40 percent and the corporation excess-profits tax will be 6 percent on profits ranging from 10 to 15 percent, and 12 percent on larger profits. Intercorporate dividends are taxed up to 10 percent.

WHEN we look back over the session as a whole, the other outstanding measures are the social-security law, the Wagner labor-relations law and the work-relief bill with its $4,800,000,000 appropriation. The first of these is chiefly of historical importance, in that it makes a beginning, however feeble, at a nationwide system of unemployment insurance and old-age pensions. There is, of course, the gravest doubt whether the Supreme Court will find it constitutional, in view of the principles laid down in the Schechter-case decision that overturned the N.R.A. The Wagner labor-relations law, designed to take the place of the late lamented Section 7a, is under the same handicap. The work-relief measure appropriated perhaps one-half the amount necessary if a real attempt were to be made to prime the pump and accelerate the upward movement of business in general. The restrictions under which the measure will operate are of such a character that it is extremely doubtful whether it can be put into effect quickly enough to be of substantial value. The policy of paying wages that are substantially less than going rates for similar work in private industry will mean a subsistence level barely better than starvation for most of those employed under the plan, and will undoubtedly help to break down wage rates in general, undoing the slow and painful efforts of a generation of union activity.

FINALLY, the demand that 3,500,000 unemployed heads of families shall go to work on relief projects or run the risk (in New York the certainty) of having all public assistance stopped, means appalling hardships to millions of persons. It means that bookkeepers and salesmen will be put to work with pick and shovel at tasks for which they are not physically competent, and that the country as a whole will lose all the value of the special training and abilities of most of these individuals. Wise social policy would of course completely separate public works from the relief problem. Help would be given to every individual in need; public works would be an entirely separate program, paying standard wages and employing persons qualified through training for the work to be done. The President's aspiration to provide work for one unemployed breadwinner in every family was a fine and generous impulse; but as it is being carried out, it constitutes one of the blackest marks against his whole administration.

THE new banking law represents, on the whole, a compromise between the views of Senator Carter Glass and those of the Roosevelt administration. Its chief importance lies in the fact that an "open market committee" of seven members of the Federal Reserve Board, plus five representatives of the Reserve banks, will buy and sell government securities as a means of controlling the movement of credit. This marks a new development in the attempt to prevent runaway booms, for which purpose the chief reliance heretofore has been in control of the rediscount rate. It is a very long way from genuine regulation of our entire banking system in the government interest. The Tennessee Valley Authority bill restores to the government the right to sell power generated at Muscle Shoals (taken away by a federal court decision)—restores it, that is, until the Supreme Court decides to act adversely in the matter. The new A.A.A. amendment is designed to halt the revolt against processing taxes that has resulted in something like 1,000 suits and 500 temporary injunctions. It provides there can be no recovery of taxes unless the processor can prove that he has absorbed them himself, which, in most cases, he has not done. Thirty percent of customs duties will be available for subsidies on exports, etc. The government is reaffirmed in its authority to take submarginal land for public purposes. A scheme for control of potato production is set up with heavy taxation on production in excess of government quotas.

ONE of the most interesting measures passed by the late Congress was the Guffey bill for control of the coal industry. It was put through under strong presidential pressure to prevent the strike that has twice been threatened by the United Mine Workers. In effect, it creates a "little N.R.A." for coal, with drastic penalties on coal operators who fail to come under its provisions. Marginal mines are to be purchased and withdrawn from production, and the general conditions of operation to be regulated and standardized. Other important measures passed in the recent session, on which space does not permit us to comment in detail at present, are the extension of the R.F.C., the H.O.L.C. and the N.R.A.; the new plan for taxation to finance railroad pensions; the substitute bill giving federal regulation of the trade in alcoholic liquors; the

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farm-credit act; the airmail law; the Frazier-Lemke farm-mortage act; the soil-erosion law; the law prohibiting suits against the government under the repudiated gold clause; Army and Navy appropriations; and the petroleum law.

WHETHER by intent or ineptitude, the Works Progress Administration in New York City seems bent on antagonizing as many of the unemployed as possible—a result that it is rapidly achieving. Union workers are being forced to acept W.P.A. jobs at wages far below union hourly rates, even though this threatens to demoralize the entire union wage structure. Skilled technicians and white-collar workers are being forced to do unskilled work and accept the wages that are given unskilled labor. Relief workers who were receiving as high as $75 a month on city relief are being forced to transfer to the W.P.A. payroll, though this may mean a reduction to the "security" wage of $55 a month. Supplemental aid to large families, for the time being, has been discontinued. Naturally, these policies are causing widespread unrest and dissatisfaction, and many workers have refused to take W.P.A. jobs. But the W.P.A. is not to be trifled with and has just issued an order to remove all able-bodied heads of families from the relief rolls—to fend for themselves or to starve, presumably—unless they accept a W.P.A. job. If they still refuse, it is announced that they will be arrested for non-support, a charge that carries a jail sentence. No doubt this bludgeoning tactic will frighten many of the jobless into seeing the wisdom of accepting the much lauded security wage of the W.P.A., but it hardly adds to the prestige and dignity of government.

NOT the least disgraceful part of the new relief program is the gross inefficiency revealed in the failure of the W.P.A. in New York City to pay its workers for a period of more than three weeks. Somewhere in Washington, it appears, somebody miscalculated, and as a result the relief checks did not come through when expected—indeed, no one seems to know just when they will arrive. The consequences of this delay were reported in The New York Times of August 22 as follows:

> Families living on $60 to $93.50 a month have received no money since the end of July. Many of them have been without sufficient food for days. Yesterday Park Commissioner Moses declared that "park relief work is becoming demoralized; a small but increasing number of men are incapable of working because of lack of food, worry, etc., and in the last few days men have been sitting around water buckets with nothing to eat."

With a beneficent gesture, the federal government took steps to meet this emergency last week by making an outright "gift" of $13 to each of 93,000 families who had gone payless. The families, it is announced, will not be expected to repay the gift. This is all very touching, but obviously it fails to compensate by a good deal for the hardship and suffering caused by the W.P.A. red tape. The present delay and confusion are almost an exact repetition of what happened a year ago last winter, when thousands of families found themselves completely stranded between local relief and the C.W.A. payroll. Eventually, one would think, the government ought to discover some system whereby relief workers, in being transferred from one payroll to another, need not experience an intermediate period of slow starvation.

SOME time ago, reports from Buenos Aires told of a mysterious shipment of arms that, when opened, proved to consist of paving stones and sand. The shipment came from France, and newspaper stories hinted that it had been destined for Paraguay, then engaged in the Chaco war. The substitution was supposed to have been made by some dare-devil international arms hi-jacker. Recent information suggests a highly interesting explanation of the episode. The shipment was eventually returned to its embarkation point, Le Havre, the mayor of which promptly declared that the paving blocks and sand were from Paris. The munitions manufacturer involved is in a suburb of that city and it seems certain that the substitution occurred when the munitions were delivered to the purchaser. The agent for this person or persons, it now develops, was a M. Aubry, and oddly enough, this is also the name of the president of a fascist association of naval reservists, a close friend of Colonel de la Roque, head of the central French fascist organization, the *Croix de feu*. It is well known that most European governments exercise a strict supervision over large-scale purchases of munitions. They try to keep them out of the hands of both radical and conservative groups that might conceivably be plotting revolution. The evidence therefore strongly suggests that the French fascists may have employed a simple strategy with which to arm themselves.

WITH the extraordinarily sweeping victory of the Social Credit Party, Alberta, Canada, has entered on an interesting economic experiment. The Party's platform calls for the payment of a "social dividend" to all those of Alberta's 700,000 population who are more than sixteen years of age. All adults of either sex will receive full dividends and youths will get smaller ones, graduated according to their age. The social dividends, which in the beginning will have a maximum value of $25 a month, will be issued in the form of non-transferable certificates, which the owner can exchange for goods. They will be redeemed by the government from the proceeds of taxes on "unearned increment," by which is apparently meant all profits, interest and rent above a specified rate. It will be seen that this is a long way from the full and formal program of Major C. H. Douglas, although that gentleman is invited to act as economic adviser to the

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province. The scheme is in fact a slightly altered version of the Townsend pension plan. We gravely doubt whether the proposed taxes will raise the $120,000,000 annually which is (by a rough guess) the sum required, and which is about 4 percent of the estimated wealth of the province. The Social Credit Party is of course counting heavily, as Dr. Townsend does, on the greatly increased activity that spending the social dividend will create. We think it is a good thing that the experiment should be tried. The rest of the world can learn valuable lessons from Alberta's experience, not the least of which will flow from the recognition by that province that every citizen is entitled to a minimum standard of life, not as a grudging dole, but as a human right.

England's Dilemma

FULFILLING the prediction in last week's issue of The New Republic, the extraordinary session of the British Cabinet, called to consider the Ethiopian crisis, adjourned without taking action. A majority of the Cabinet, apparently, found against the youthful Captain Eden, who a few days earlier had been threatening sanctions against Italy. It was announced that England would follow the decision taken at the forthcoming session of the League Council. Since action by the Council must be unanimous, this means that the final word will rest with France. Few things are more unlikely than that the Laval government will vote for sanctions against Mussolini, and this the British know.

The explanation of the concern, even bewilderment, exhibited by the British Cabinet, appears to lie in its sudden appreciation of the far-reaching military implications of Mussolini's preparations for war. There is every sign that European politics are moving into the phase in which military strength is the deciding factor. Policies are being determined by nineteen-year-old boys with bayonets in their hands, rather than by note-writing diplomats, and the future course of events can be judged only by counting up regiments, bombers and battleships.

Six months ago Massawa was an unprotected harbor on the Red Sea, unkempt and miserable, inhabited by twelve thousand natives and a few homesick Italian officials. Since then its population has increased tenfold, and it is in process of being transformed into a first-class military and air base. The railroad from Massawa to Asmara, on the Eritrean plateau, has been completely rebuilt. At present it is being used to transport military supplies to the Ethiopian border, but in the future, if Massawa were besieged, it could equally be used to bring food and various other supplies down from the plateau.

Since the Egyptian dispute between England and France in the eighteen-nineties, it has been understood that the route through the Mediterranean, the Suez Canal and on down the Red Sea was an English highway. The military bases along this route have been Gibraltar, Malta, Alexandria and Aden—all British garrisons. It is now evident that the one certain result of Mussolini's attack on Ethiopia will be the creation of a new military base at Massawa, by which England's road can be blocked as if by a steel door.

The door could not be kept permanently shut. As long as England continues to hold both ends of the Red Sea, Massawa is militarily isolated from Italy. In a war in which England and Italy were on opposite sides, Massawa's ultimate reduction by the British would be inevitable. But, drawing supplies from the Eritrean hinterland, it might hold out for weeks and months, and during that time England would be cut off from its traditional eastern route.

Massawa, itself, however, is not what chiefly concerns the British cabinet. A number of British officials have become convinced that, in the back of his mind, Mussolini aspires to challenge, in the future, England's control not merely of the Red Sea, but of the whole eastern Mediterranean and the Suez Canal as well. If he wishes to make Ethiopia into Italy's chief colony, he has the strongest motives for doing exactly this, since otherwise Italy will hold Ethiopia only upon sufferance of England.

From a technical military point of view, the startling fact is that Mussolini has the means with which to carry out this aim—if it really is his aim. For more than two generations, the narrow stretch of water between Sicily and Tunis has been dominated by the British fortress of Malta. But, with the perfection of air power, military experts are beginning to believe that Malta would be extremely vulnerable. Certainly it could easily be bombed from Sicily. Unless England were prepared to establish an air fleet at Malta equal to the largest one that Italy could bring against it, Malta might turn out to be a military liability. Parenthetically, it may be worth noting that in recent years Mussolini has repeatedly collided with the British authorities at Malta by trying to inculcate a feeling of loyalty to Italy among its Italian-speaking inhabitants. Only in the light of such purely military considerations as these does the British cabinet's fumbling hesitation become explicable.

The attitude of France is similarly governed, for the moment, by military considerations. If England and Italy fought, in the end Italy, lacking in all important raw materials, would be beaten, although probably not until it had won astonishing victories in the Mediterranean. But the crushing of Italy would mean not only that Austria would fall into Hitler's hands, but that German influence would become predominant eastward to the borders of Russia. As it is, even now the Little Entente members are terrified, and asking themselves anxiously whether they should not make such terms with Hitler as they can. But should the French system of alliances in eastern Europe fall to the ground, the French general staff would find itself faced with a

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wholly new military situation. Despite the recently formed military alliance with Russia, the general staff stoutly maintains that German dominance in eastern Europe would vitally endanger the safety of France. How sincere it is in this contention is open to doubt, but at least it has convinced the Laval government of the thesis. The result is that France cannot vote at Geneva for punitive measures against Italy, even though Laval knows that the failure of the League to intervene in the Ethiopian crisis will mean its moral ruin. The specter of Göring's air fleet above the French border outweighs all other considerations.

What we see now is a Europe ruled by soldiers. In the case of England, it has very little to win by war, and it might lose its empire. The civilian government of England would make almost any sacrifice to preserve European tranquility. What has happened is that the Cabinet's military advisers have said: "If you permit Italian boys armed with airplanes and bombs to remain on the shore of the Red Sea, we can no longer be responsible for the security of British interests in the Near East, in Africa and India." And the French government's military advisers have said to Laval: "If you countenance any weakening of Italy's military power, we will no longer guarantee the French-German border." When these military men speak, the civilian governments become paralyzed.

Mr. Lansing's Unneutrality

DURING their attempt in the closing days of the recently ended session of Congress to compel the administration to adopt a permanent neutrality policy, Senators Nye and Clark published a hitherto secret letter from Secretary of State Lansing to President Wilson. This well guarded letter, which was written on September 6, 1915, throws a bright and revealing light on the part played by loans to belligerents in involving us in the World War. In this letter, Lansing explains to Mr. Wilson that the Allies are paying for our munitions through the mobilization of American securities held in Allied countries. This means of payment, he points out, will be exhausted by the end of 1915, or in three more months, and unless the Allies can float loans in this country, their munitions orders must cease.

Secretary Lansing then recalls to Mr. Wilson that shortly after the outbreak of the war in 1914, Secretary of State Bryan, Lansing's predecessor, had announced that the Wilson administration would look with disfavor on loans to belligerents as incompatible with "the true spirit of neutrality." Secretary Lansing wants Mr. Wilson to agree to a reversal of this policy, and makes his argument in these striking terms:

> If the European countries cannot find means to pay for the excess of goods sold to them over those purchased from them, they will have to stop buying and our present export trade will shrink proportionately. The result will be restriction of output, industrial depression, idle capital and idle labor, numerous failures, financial demoralization, and general unrest and suffering among the labor classes.

He then comes to the heart of his argument, which is that popular sentiment "has become crystallized in favor of one or another of the belligerents," implying that the floating of loans would not change or strengthen sentiment in any material degree. His argument rests wholly upon the soundness of this prediction.

What was it that Lansing was saying? He was saying that an American holding a $1,000 British government bond, the value of which would be destroyed in the event of an Allied defeat, would be no more prejudiced in favor of the Allies than if he did not own it. He was saying that the existence of a large number of investors holding Allied obligations would not affect the sentiment of the country as a whole. With the advantage of hindsight, we know that neither of these predictions of Lansing was sound.

But perhaps the most significant fact about the Lansing letter is its clear revelation that, in the autumn of 1915, neither he nor any other member of the administration directly concerned with this question (with the possible exception of Mr. Wilson) was seeking to make a dispassionate appraisal of fact. By that time, the country was in the midst of the war boom, and Lansing's only thoughts were of staving off its imminent collapse. He tells Mr. Wilson:

> Can we afford to let a declaration [discouraging loans to belligerents] as to our conception of the "true spirit of neutrality," made in the first days of the War, stand in the way of our national interests which seem so seriously threatened? . . . My own opinion is that we ought to allow the loans to be made for our own good.

Lansing's recommendation prevailed, the loans were made and eventually we were at war with Germany. At the session of Congress just closed the Roosevelt administration refused to accept legislation forbidding loans to belligerents, alleging that further study of the question was essential. It may be confidently prophesied, however, that unless a prohibition against loans is made a part of our permanent neutrality policy, there will come a day when another Lansing will write an approximately similar letter to another President, and that it will be the preliminary step to this country's entering a new war. There is a theory that in each new war, the generals blindly overlook whatever has been learned by their predecessors in the last war, and start over again with practically the same set of tactics that led their predecessors into proven blunders. Such a theory, it becomes clear, should never be restricted to the military mind alone.

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Art and Terre Haute

A YOUNG artist in Terre Haute, Indiana, obtained permission to decorate, without compensation, the walls of the Junior High School. Paint being too expensive, he used colored chalk. The result is a series of murals that appear to be powerful and original, to have both something to say and a way of saying it.

One wall, entitled Liberation, is covered by a background of intricate machinery and armament, at the top of which is a design in steel sheeting and pipes resembling a skull, with a steam gauge in its forehead. In the center, dominating the wall, stands the figure of a giant man in a white laboratory coat. The face is intelligent, confident and strong. The figure has six sturdy arms. Two, outstretched at the side, keep back the rampant cold machinery. One hand in front holds a microscope, and another embraces a young man, whose expression is puzzled but determined. One hand over the giant's head is clenched. There is still another arm, the most arresting, and this points forward, toward the spectator.

Of this design the artist, Gilbert Wilson, writes: "The giant white figure is Science, or Organized Knowledge. . . . This north mural is not preaching that machinery is wrong, or that machines must be halted. It is the wrong use of machinery that must be stopped. Production for insanely selfish profit is what causes machinery to become an evil instead of a boon to mankind; hence the monstrous animation of the steel; hence the skull with its implication of tragedy; hence the belching cannons signifying ruthless destruction."

The mural on the south wall defies description. Though it contains no less than eighteen interwoven motifs, and is intended to suggest the chaos of modern society, it has a strange unity of composition. In the center is a kindly old man, "in the sun but not basking. The very flick of his tie bespeaks bustling activity." About him chaos rages. Ranks of arms reach out for the aid of a medical research worker, whose activity is hindered by a fat, pink hand. "This fat, pink hand, wherever it appears in the mural, may be interpreted as a symbol of the profit motive."

Elsewhere in the design, a young sculptor is interrupted at his work by a war extra, extended by the same kind of hand, while another hand waves a cheap cotton American flag that has begun to rip from its staff. One student's comment on this detail was: "They must have been waving the flag too hard." A farmer contemplates his plowed furrows with deep satisfaction. Soldiers turn their guns on terrified munitions makers. Boys of four races clasp hands. Below them is a burial ground covered with many rows of white crosses, on each of which is inscribed "Why?" A teacher instructs her class in the mysteries of pollination. A speaker, against the background of a world in flames and a whirling airplane propeller, addresses a crowd that will not listen. At the top is the fascist symbol, with a purple-faced demagogue and masked capitalists, flanked by long ranks of workers, in united front, closing in.

The artistic merit of these remarkable murals aroused little discussion in Terre Haute, but the social implications brought hostility. The American Legion tried to make the artist change them. An inscription from the Declaration of Independence was attributed by a member of the school board to Eugene Debs, but when he learned the origin of the words, he still thought they were too radical.

The words simply concerned the people's right to abolish old governments and institute new ones. This inscription, together with similar quotations from Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson, has been concealed by the hanging of American flags. For a time it was feared that the murals would be removed entirely, and apparently there is still a danger that the walls will be painted over some time during the summer. What is most discouraging of all, however, is that this unexpected outburst of native talent has not been encouraged by further opportunity. Not only to destroy the past work of the artist, but to prevent him from creating anything else, seems to be the automatic response of his own community. But this is what any artist who chooses to speak out on the controversial subjects of his times will have to expect—at first.

Unless we are gravely mistaken, Gilbert Wilson will be proudly claimed in the future, not only by Terre Haute, but by Indiana and the United States. It would be well, at least, to bestir ourselves in order that this possibility may be explored. Nobody has ever solved the mystery of why an artist should struggle to give the world something that the world appears not to want. But appearances in such cases are sometimes deceptive. Judging by the impression that copies of these murals have made upon those to whom we have shown them, it looks as if Mr. Wilson has a larger public waiting for him than he now has reason to believe.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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What Has Africa Given America?

IT HAS long been understood that contacts between groups representing different customs, practices and beliefs result in mutual borrowings. In the instance of contacts with Negroes in the United States, however, this principle is either blandly overlooked or emotionally denied. Why is the proposition that the Negro contributed nothing of his aboriginal African heritage to American life so firmly rooted in American thought? The answer is not difficult to find, if it be sought in terms of those social and economic forces that lodge deeply in the historical past of our country; and, more directly, in the institution of slavery, within which the slaves were marked off from the rest of the population not alone by social status, but by a striking difference in skin color. With this in mind, we can understand why it is generally believed that the Africans brought to this country had neither innate capabilities nor cultural endowments that they could transmit to their white masters.

An impartial investigation of the facts, however, will show, first, that those who were brought not only to the United States, but to the much larger area in the New World where Negro slavery prevailed, came preponderantly from regions of West Africa where the high and complex civilizations of the continent are found; that, therefore, they brought with them a culture that provided much they might offer in exchange for the European tradition of their masters. And in the second place, those Negroes who were enslaved constituted at least an adequate cross-section of the human resources of the region from which they were taken. Indeed it is quite possible that they represented more than the expected proportion of those from the upper end of the scale. Is it not possible that the enslaved New World Negroes had cultural traits of their own that were handed on to their masters?

If this is the case, it should be possible to find that Africanisms, in however modified a form, are present in at least some aspects of the life of the predominant white population of this country. It must be evident from what has been said above that this field is one as yet largely unexplored, though even such a preliminary review of the evidence as I have been able to make has disclosed some suggestive material for more intensive study. The task presents large difficulties, however. Thus, to trace Africanisms in the behavior of American Negroes, let alone of American whites, comparison with the customs of the Negroes of the Caribbean must be made before we can think of correlation with the complexities of West African civilizations. As a result, in attempting to indicate certain phases of our culture that are marked by Africanisms, it is essential that the mutations undergone by these traditions be kept in mind. On the basis of our present knowledge, what can we trace in the complex pattern of our American cultural fabric to African influences? Can we find anything African not only in our music and our speech, where this element has sometimes been felt to be present, but also in such aspects of our culture as our "manners," cooking, religious expression?

Two distinct types of American music generally recognized as Negro are the spirituals and jazz, though to admit they are of Negro derivation does not necessarily mean that they are African. This, indeed, has been denied most strongly in the case of the spirituals, which, while held to be the product of the Negro's musical gift, are claimed merely to be songs based on themes learned from the white masters. I myself, some years ago, accepted the propositions that the element of syncopation, a trite African rhythmic form, in the spirituals has been inspired by the "Scotch snap"; that part singing is unknown to primitive Africans; that the pentatonic scale is Celtic, not Negro; and that major-and-minor singing is entirely foreign to Africa.

Since that time, field work has shown me that these conclusions do not hold. The Ashanti who sang into my recording phonograph could not refrain from part singing, while I have heard and recorded many songs in the minor key in Dahomey, in some of which the pentatonic scale was regularly employed. It is impossible to speak of "an" African music, just as it is impossible to speak of "an" African language. There are as many musical idioms as there are dialects, and more, for each culture has various forms of song. Some of those songs, among certain West African tribes, sound not at all unlike spirituals, even though our spirituals have become so refined and over-refined as they are sung in the concert hall or white churches that the difficulty in recognizing their parentage is quite understandable.

We are prone to overlook the important fact that the spirituals comprise only a small portion of American Negro music. Even religious music itself varies strikingly; those who have heard Negroes sing in some of the "shouting" churches will understand how different from the spiritual, as conventionally conceived, these songs can be. In addition, there are work songs and songs of derision, love songs and dance songs. It is these less known forms of music that have come down into American life as jazz, rather than the spirituals; it is in their rhythms, their melodic progressions, their seeming cacophonies, that we must look for the heritage that has been given musical America by the Africans who sang and, singing, inspired

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those to whom their song eventually passed down.

One need only play phonograph records of African music to a group of young people of dancing age—to a class of college students, let us say—and watch their unconscious bodily movements and the expressions on their faces, or listen to their comments after the record is finished, and contrast with this the manner in which they react to another primitive musical idiom—such as that of the American Indian—to realize that the latter is entirely foreign to them, while the African song is received with the recognition that is accorded something pleasurably familiar. Jazz is uniquely American, as anyone can testify who has heard a group of French or British or German musicians trying to play it—but in its derivation and its spirit it is African. And by the same token, those experiments in "serious" music that have attempted to utilize this form owe their inspiration, all unknowingly and unadmittedly, to the African sources from which this "American" musical form came.

Certain aspects of American speech, particularly the pronunciation of English by Southerners, whether Negro or white, must also be referred to Africa. This fact, like the provenience of the spirituals, has been asserted by some, but, as with the spirituals, recent thought has swung away from such an explanation. Southern speech is now most generally accounted for by reference to the various dialects of English that were current during Elizabethan and post-Elizabethan times. Quite aside from the difficulties present in attempting to reconstruct the pronunciation of English dialects of that period, the logic of the explanations put forward to bolster the validity of this hypothesis fails to carry conviction. Thus, it is pointed out that there are a variety of southern dialects, and that this precludes any acceptance of an "African" origin of these modes of pronunciation. Yet a person unskilled in differentiating a Virginian from a Georgian accent would have no difficulty in distinguishing the speech of either from that of a New Englander, though New England speech is derived from types of English pronunciation not too dissimilar to that which marked the speech of the ancestors of present-day Southern whites. Furthermore, it cannot be overlooked that those who maintain the Elizabethan origin of Southern speech have had little or no contact, either at first hand or through an analysis of the published literature, with the structure and phonetics of the West African tongues.

In this case the argument runs something in this fashion: that the Negroes brought to the New World came from peoples having entirely different cultures and mutually unintelligible languages; that it was the policy of slave owners to separate the slaves who came from the same tribe; that the slaves, therefore, being unable to speak to each other, lost their aboriginal speech and adopted the language of their masters. Yet the first of these propositions shows lack of knowledge concerning the cultural and linguistic situation in West Africa, while to maintain the last indicates a high degree of linguistic naïveté. Actually, though each of the cultures and languages of West Africa displays a superficial individuality—I cannot here give the evidence that proves a preponderantly West African origin of New World Negroes—a closer study shows that underneath the surface dissimilarities there exists a basic resemblance. In the field of language this takes the form of mutually unintelligible dialects, which, however, have very similar structural and idiomatic organization; while the phonetics of all these tongues is about the same.

What happened, then, when the Negroes came to the New World? They learned new words—in English, Spanish, Portuguese or French—but they spoke these words with a West African pronunciation, and poured their new vocabulary into the mold of West African grammatical and idiomatic forms. And, having done this, many of them were entrusted with raising the children of their masters. From whom, then, did these white children learn to speak? Obviously from their Negro nurses, as many Southerners acknowledge.

Yet it is not only phonetically that Southern speech has been influenced by the Negro. It is trite to point out how "musical" is Southern speech. Cadenced more than any other American dialect, it may almost be said to have melodic line, and it is not insignificant in this connection that a basic aspect of West African speech is the presence of what linguists call "significant tone." This is a characteristic that we most frequently associate with Chinese, but it is true of many other languages, such as those of numerous American Indian tribes, and means that to pronounce a word—a phonetic combination—in different tonal registers gives it different meanings. In the United States, significant tone has not persisted, but its survival as modulation may well have given Southern speech its distinctive musical quality. There remains the matter of idiom, and certain survivals of African idioms can be detected in American speech. One example may make the point—that of the word "hot" used in the sense of "exciting." "Now you're getting hot!" someone says to a jazz player, never dreaming that he is repeating an African turn of phrase also found in Negro French.

Another distinctive quality in the life of the South is the important role assigned to the art of proper behavior. "Mind your manners" is a fundamental tenet there, and the graciousness of life in the South is due in no small measure to these values. Now it is indeed a commonplace that all peoples have their codes of behavior, and that, as population increases and allows of the development of a leisure class, these codes become more and more involved. Is there nevertheless something especially African here? It is, in all probability, more a matter of emphasis than anything else. We know that Africans place the greatest of emphasis

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on good manners; that proper behavior—in the sense of an ability to observe the minutiae of a code of politeness—is a first requirement in any social intercourse. It is an attitude seen in the tale of the Ashanti nobleman who committed suicide because he had been guilty of a breach of decorum; and in the fighting reaction of a Haitian when called *"mal élevé,"* to use two extreme examples.

Respect for elders, the soft voice before one who is a power in his community, the excessive employment of terms of endearment or kinship in neighborly contacts—these partake of the essence of African behavior, and are familiar to us as elements in the Southern-white code of politeness. The forms themselves are in the main those of European derivation, and are particularly referable to the codes of chivalry. Yet again, it is the spirit of African politeness that has been borrowed, and, in this case as in that of speech, it has given a flavor to the specific social phenomenon so distinctive that it cannot be mistaken by those who have experienced African politeness in its native home.

As far as I know, no one has attempted to account for the distinction of the Southern cuisine. This development of a special series of dishes marks the cooking not only of the southern United States, but the Caribbean Islands as well. Of course, it may be objected that there is no such thing as a Southern cuisine—that the dishes of New Orleans are not those of Charleston. Yet fried chicken, like gumbo, or the extensive and particularized use of yams, okra, rice, is fairly general throughout the South; and even though one grants the differences in local cooking traditions, it must nevertheless be realized that the cuisine of Richmond is no more merely a modification and adaptation of that of England than the dishes served at New Orleans are those of France. Yet the ancestry of the master class in the first region is English, and in the second French.

It is instructive to compare the cooking of the southeastern United States with that of New England. Both these traditions are held by people—white people—of British descent. It is almost self-evident, however, that New England cooking is closer to the ancestral tradition than is that of Charleston or Savannah. May not the unknown element in the equation be the Negro? I can cite one case of a family whose cook, in slavery times, was for some reason incapacitated. They were forced to put a newly arrived slave girl, fresh from Africa, in the kitchen and found her cooking quite acceptable. This is not surprising to one who has visited Africa, learned something of West African cooking, and has seen the cooked foods for sale in every market. Cooking in deep fat is one of the most important African methods of preparing food, and fried foods are standard there. The very word "gumbo" is African in its origin. Of a similar character is the high seasoning found in most Southern cooking. The African and Caribbean Island Negro cook of a white visitor finds it difficult not to season his employer's food too highly, for even though it may seem insipid to him, there is still too much pepper in it. Hence once again, influence of an African tradition on at least certain regional aspects of American cooking should not be neglected, nor, in the extent to which these have spread, its general influence on American cuisine.

As a final instance, we may turn to the field of religious behavior, particularly to that of sects where worship through possession takes its more violent, unrestrained forms. Here it is important to ask how similar sects in Europe—if, indeed, they have any counterparts there—conduct their worship; for possession, as such, is a world-wide phenomenon. When the forms that possession takes in Europe are investigated, however, these socialized types of auto-hypnosis that characterize our American churches are found to be absent. In Europe possession is more personal, resulting from individual hallucination rather than from the group excitation superinduced by a monotony of rhythm and the exhortations of a preacher. On the other hand, numerous similarities are found between the services in Negro "shouting" churches and those of the white cults where possession occurs. Often the same sect includes white as well as Negro congregations; thus, the Church of God, most of whose members are Negro, has its headquarters in the North, and most of its leaders (though not its preachers) are white men.

When it is observed how similar is the behavior of the whites and Negroes in these hysterical sects, the problem once again poses itself—did the Negroes take their tradition from the whites, or did the whites borrow from the Negroes? Those who hold to the former position point out that white churches of this type exist in the West, or in the mountainous regions of the South, far from any Negro influence. They also point to the traditional camp meeting, with its hysterical forms of worship. Yet once more, one who is acquainted with the African forms of possession seen in Africa itself, and, no less, in the West Indies and in certain American Negro churches, and who recognizes the ease with which the diffusion of culture can take place, is led to ask why the possibility of worship of this type having come from the African side of the contact is left out of account.

In religious practices, therefore, as in those several secular aspects of life that have been mentioned, it would seem that reasonable indications of revamped survivals of African traditions are not lacking. Much further investigation along these lines is desirable, and necessary if we are to have an undistorted concept of the roots from which our culture has grown. Enough has been said to indicate that, in this country, both whites and Negroes took, both gave. Just how much was taken from the Negroes remains to be determined.

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS.

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DAHOMEAN SONGS FOR THE DEAD

Throughout Africa song accompanies work, worship and all activity that dramatizes living and dying. In Dahomey, where some three hundred songs were recorded on a field phonograph, the singer who introduces new lines to songs has the esteem of his group. For the cults of the earth gods and the dead, improvisation is a traditional prerogative, and there are even "ghost composers" who furnish lines to men of substance to praise their ancestors. The songs given here are from interlinear translations of native texts. Since tone is grammatically significant, it has been impossible to suggest the native verse patterns; the imagery, however, has been fully retained. The resemblance of Dahomean songs both in feeling and idiom to American spirituals is significant as pointing to their common lineage.

F. H.

I

The planter gathers his peppers,
And the pepper bird weeps,
And weeping, sings
"Alas, Life has given us an evil portion,
For hunger is our lot, and death."

II

In the bush an old woman
Crouches amid the leaves
And weeps;
A white-haired woman
Weeps in the bush,
And she says
To the birds, she says,
"Your life is to be envied;
How is it that man
Born into life
Shares no more generations?
Shares no more . . .
How is it that man
Loses all at once his generation?"

III

On the highway
A little hunchback
Came upon a man with smallpox.
And the man with the pox
Said to him, he said,
"For me the gods have a cure,
But you, brother,
Your hump never can be broken."

If Death were a war
That trained its guns at this house,
It would come on feet,
Through our hedge,
And toward the house.

Monkeys swim against a current;
When they swim against the rain,
Their lungs swell.

IV

LEADER:
Do not weep,
Nothing stays Death,
Nor the day of its coming.

CHORUS:
Death troubles us—o!
Death troubles us.

As the flies fret our backs,
Returning, and returning,
So Death troubles us—o!
Death troubles us.

As the pigeons alight
On a house top,
And dance, and dance,
So Death dances—o!
Death dances.

Ai-yo!
Ai-yo-o!

V

I see it,
There is no enjoying beyond Death,
And I say to you all, say,
That which your senses taste of Life,
Goes with you.

I say to you, say,
The wives you have,
The passion you know of them,
Goes with you.

I say to you, say,
The meats you eat,
The relish you have of them,
Goes with you.

I say to you, say,
The drinks you drink,
The pleasure of them,
Goes with you.

I say to you, say,
The pipes you smoke,
The quiet they bring,
Goes with you.

Come, then,
Dance all the colors of Life
For a lover of pleasure
Now dead.

FRANCES HERSKOVITS.

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Why Not Housing?

WHAT Mark Twain said of the weather is also applicable to the housing situation in the United States: everybody talks about it, but no one does anything. For several years we have had a series of promises emanating from Washington that a vast rehousing program was about to get under way; but after all this time, the actual achievements are still negligible, either as public works, to stimulate activity helping relieve the depression, or as assistance to the many millions of Americans now living in substandard dwellings. This seems an appropriate moment, therefore, to discuss the status of the housing movement, particularly because the new relief program, for which $249,000,000 for housing was promised, is now at last getting under way, and because in the country at large, residential construction seems to have begun definitely to revive. I propose to discuss both public and private housing activities and, in the public field, those of all the various government agencies.

Objectives in Housing.—What objectives should be sought through a housing program? We should seek to create communities properly planned, without too great density of population per acre, with adequate light, ventilation, view, open recreation spaces and physical equipment. Such a community should be well placed with respect to the present and future working and recreational activities of its inhabitants; it should be large enough to be free from extraneous noise, including that of burdensome motor traffic. While our housing generally lacks such characteristics, they are conspicuously absent, for obvious reasons, in the homes of poor people. It is now quite clear, and generally admitted, that this very large group cannot obtain adequate housing without financial assistance from the government through direct subsidy and the indirect form provided in low interest rates.

A second objective in a country where most housing is done by private enterprise, is to raise the incredibly low existing and traditional standards of physical building, of grouping, of amenities of planning, of intelligent interrelationships with daily life generally. This latter could be achieved to a degree at least by a large and speedy government program which would set up plentiful visual examples, and be a potential competitive threat to inferior private work.

In this country the Federal Housing Administration commands a more direct means for influencing private work because of its partial control of funds through its insurance of loans. Thus, the dual objective of a sensible governmental housing policy is: to create numbers of communities, with principal emphasis on low-income groups; and directly and indirectly to raise the quality of housing generally by whomsoever built. Reëmployment, followed by permanent employment, is a third important objective in a long-range housing policy.

The Situation in Washington.—A short time ago I visited Washington to observe what has been happening in the various housing divisions. The technical set-up, the personnel and procedure in each of the divisions, are first-rate. It is the policies at the top that have been preventing progress, the top thinking that has been inadequate. I want to emphasize this, because if it turns out later that little has been accomplished, and that the Washington overhead per unit of product is outrageously high, it will be held simply to have proved again that bureaucracy is inefficient and costly. That just isn't so in this case.

I should say that man for man, the personnel of the various government housing organizations is better than I have seen in any one private organization, and that it works with more sustained enthusiasm. The government agencies have drawn up excellent procedures and standards, methods of planning, methods of analyzing local data, information on materials and costs. The one grave defect is that the housing to be built by the P.W.A., in my judgment, will be rather mechanically determined by sociological and cost data and analyses. It will not be inspired architecture. Such architecture can result only from a synthesis of these underlying factors with creative talent and creative force, a sublimation of daily usefulness into aesthetic achievement. But the fact that this is receiving little thought is merely symptomatic of the present state of architecture in the country generally.

What are the Washington policies, the policies determined by the top people, and why have they generally tended to nullify the excellent technical work? In the Public Works Administration low-cost housing there have been two chief points that prevent reasonable progress toward a reasonable goal: the insistence on locating housing on slum land, and overcentralization of enterprise in Washington.

Aside from the many other important reasons why low-rental housing should not in its initial stages be tied to slum clearance, the important fact here is that it slows up construction progress by varying periods—from a minimum of four to six months, to an unascertainable maximum. An example of such a maximum is a case in Chicago where after a good deal of work had been done, it was found that one large site had to be abandoned because of rising prices. In the case of Louisville, unsuc-

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cessful litigation has held up the project. Slum land must be assembled from a myriad of separate owners, many of them recalcitrant and possessed of good lawyers; vacant land is generally in the hands of one or a few owners. This has been the serious bottleneck preventing progress.

Washington's insistence on running everything from the capital city makes the bottleneck still narrower and results in misunderstandings and resentments locally. Frequently, months of planning by local groups, sites selected by them, have been thrown out by Washington, and the thing must start again from scratch. In some cases this is justified, in many others it is purely arbitrary and based on irrelevant grounds. Since Washington will get the credit for whatever is accomplished, it should be prepared to take the blame for delays and mistakes. It should continue in the role of guide, not of omniscient commander. The situation is masked temporarily because those who are confronted with it—architects and local municipal officials—are reluctant to risk possible reprisals by giving it any public notice.

The Housing Record Thus Far.—The actual record speaks for itself. Some 3,000 living units costing about $11,000,000 are either completed or nearly so. These are all the old limited-dividend enterprises, built on vacant land. Of the government building on slum land, construction has started on five projects—two in Atlanta, one each in Cleveland, Indianapolis and Montgomery—with some 3,100 dwelling units costing $12,000,000; and sites have been completely acquired and demolition is under way or completed in New York, Chicago, Milwaukee, Nashville, Indianapolis and Atlantic City on projects for 8,850 families, costing some $25,000,000. Beyond that, the P.W.A. list in July shows other sites where condemnation proceedings are under way or option work is proceeding, but sites are not yet acquired. Hazarding a translation of these facts into completion dates: two years after the P.W.A. started its work, 3,000 living units were completed. Three years later, another 3,100 will have been finished and three and a half years later an additional 8,850. Some time after that, 14,000 more will have been finished. There have been additional preliminary allotments, but no one can guess accurately when they will be completed. This needlessly slow rate of operation robs the eventual result of real significance. We shall have a few more examples of model housing, but their effectiveness will be nothing like that of new construction worth $150,000,000 that had been finished in the first year or eighteen months. Such an achievement would have counted heavily by way of example, of encouragement, of showing what housing can really do for reëmployment if given a chance.

The Public Works Adminsitration has just made a notable forward step in regard to financial charges, which determine ultimate rentals to tenants. The original plan was for a 30-percent outright grant toward the building cost. The remaining 70 percent would have been amortized over a forty-five-year period, with interest at 4 percent. The P.W.A. now makes an outright grant of 45 percent on the entire cost of land and building. The other 55 percent bears a 3-percent interest rate, and is to be amortized in sixty years. This ought to make possible reductions in rents of about two dollars per room per month, rendering this housing available for groups with substantially lower incomes than would otherwise have been reached.

The P.W.A. is at last convinced that some of its projects, at least, should be undertaken on vacant land. Pressure on the officials to continue and extend this policy must not be relaxed; it is impossible to overestimate the value, for the sake of speed, lower cost and the necessary freedom of planning, of using open or practically open land in the first stages of a housing program.

Little need be said in the present article on the subject of subsistence homesteads, now transferred from the P.W.A. to the Rural Resettlement Administration. They have already been excoriated justly and by many people. Based on a misapplication of the real meaning of decentralization, with overtones of sentimentalism and nostalgia, the wholly false theory was that maldistribution of wealth can be cured by change of locale. Such as it is, this work has gone ahead rapidly, since sites were promptly acquired and there was no such embattled opposition as developed in the field of urban housing.

The Federal Housing Administration.—The F.H.A. was created about a year ago to aid private building. This was to be done by insuring personal loans for renovation up to $2,000 (this sum now increased to $50,000), and by making mortgage loans for new houses and for large-scale housing developments. On the theory that residential building of all kinds ought to be stimulated, the program was aided at the beginning by manufacturers of building materials, by industrialists and by the building-and-loan associations. The staff of technicians have done good work, notably in publishing useful guides for prospective clients and setting up standards, but what the F.H.A. has concentrated on is propaganda—high-powered, persistent, and as lacking in information as the real-estate ballyhoo of subdividers in boom days. The F.H.A., in short, is doing its best to restore construction to the state before the great collapse five years ago, with feverish production of poorly planned houses for middle-class people, who are left with no security of environment. Its policy of discouraging second mortgages and encouraging long-term first mortgages, while meant to allay the fears of the home owner, actually requires of him a larger down payment, and an unfair proportion of the burden of the inevitable deterioration of his house and its environment or of the disastrous effect of bad times, which the second mortgagee used to share.

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Back to Normalcy.—Housing is being done privately today both in and near our cities that is no better and in some respects worse than the stupid building of the twenties; indeed, in the decade of boom rentals there were more indications of liberal planning than usually exist today. In most of the new work we see the same dreary rows of detached suburban houses with narrow alleys between, the same small "developments" with no significant planning behind them, the same jumble of Elizabetho-Flushing and Norman-Highland-Park facades. The 100-foot apartment houses, covering 80 percent of their plots, are even worse because they have stuck on the pseudo-modern trappings of corner windows, aluminum trim and weird entrance halls. It is discouraging to learn that this construction is financed by banks, insurance companies and building-and-loan associations. The builder, who as usual is in most cases looking for a quick profit, is hopeless; but one might have expected the lending institutions, which will be involved for twenty or twenty-five years, to have learned at least a little during these recent sad times of grief and foreclosures. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation and similar government salvaging units are directly to blame for much of this situation. First, they have thawed out frozen loans to the extent of billions and thereby made new funds available; second, the lenders are encouraged to believe that they will be rescued once more from the results of their fresh errors of today.

Much renovation work is being done in buildings and neighborhoods whose fundamental situation makes it unwise to spend more money. These conditions are not altered by the renovation that is under way, which merely results in putting higher burdens of expense on specific pieces of property. Nothing is being done in the way of large-scale neighborhood rehabilitation. In short, we are getting recovery without reform, with a vengeance—a little recovery, no reform and no progress.

In brief, then, the P.W.A. has followed policies that have prevented any significant accomplishment in community planning or low-rental housing. The powerful direct and indirect results promised have not appeared. Lately, it has begun to respond to realities by lowering money rates and initiating projects on vacant land. And as for the F.H.A., it has done nothing to guide housing into intelligent channels. It has improved the mortgage situation technically without appreciably improving the all-important physical and environmental structure underlying it.

The Immediate Future.—The $400,000,000 now available for all P.W.A. housing can be useful only if it is spent rapidly and intelligently—say, within a year. If progress is as slow as in the past, the result will be failure and it will be said that under our conditions success is impossible. Only effective public pressure can keep the government activities on their proper course, especially if prosperity returns and speculative development begins again.

Two housing bills were submitted during the session of Congress which, as I write, is just closing. The Wagner bill would provide a permanent Housing Division in the Department of the Interior to execute "a long-range slum-clearance and low-rent public housing program." It would appropriate $800,000,000 for grants and loans to local public housing bodies at interest rates as low as those in federal bonds maturing in ten years or more. The other bill, introduced by Mr. Ellenbogen, would set up an independent United States Housing Authority of three members appointed by the President, either to supervise local projects, or to initiate others on its own responsibility. The Ellenbogen bill, with its wider powers, seems to me the better of the two; but the chief value of either one would rest in the fact that low-rental housing would become a permanent objective of our national policy, not merely a temporary means of relieving unemployment.

People in Washington in a position to know tell me the Rural Resettlement Administration has some good ideas about housing; I hope this is true. If any government official with funds at his disposal really wanted to get housing done, the achievement is not impossible. While a comprehensive solution of the problem of low-rental housing probably involves nothing less than a revolutionary change of the capitalist order, the experience of England and Continental countries shows that substantial strides are possible. At present, we are far behind. If housing should get a real start in America, it would go forward at an accelerating pace because actual achievement would rally a powerful public support that is now only latent. When broad, well informed, insistent pressure of public opinion begins to exert itself, we can perhaps hope to get housing of a kind and in an amount that is really worth while.

ALBERT MAYER.

Stephen's Son

This child is ponderous with terrible wisdom:
At ten all knowledge is behind his stare.
Austere, remotely grave, he lives in secret.
We would approach the boy, but scarcely dare.

On misty afternoons we hear him shouting,
Playing his lonely games across the field.
But silently he comes home for his supper:
We smile and speak, but he will never yield.

Something within his voice, his eyes, reproves us.
He stares aloof on unfamiliar scene.
Our invitations he refuses firmly.
In some mysterious world he moves serene.
His father died before his mother bore him:
"Perhaps," she sighs, "if Stephen were not dead...."
And then she weeps, observing the cold gestures,
The alien dignity, the curious proud head.

LIONEL WIGGAM.

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The Big Corporations Rule

In The New Republic of August 28, we published the more important sections of a recent statement by Robert H. Jackson, Special Counsel to the Internal Revenue Bureau, made for the Senate Finance Committee, discussing income and taxation in the United States at the present time. The document published below is Mr. Jackson's companion statement, also slightly condensed, on the role of the corporation in American life today.—THE EDITORS.

THE President, in his tax message of June 29, 1935, says:

> I, therefore, recommend the substitution of a corporation-income tax graduated according to the size of corporation income in place of the present uniform corporation-income tax of 13¾ percent. The rate for smaller corporations might well be reduced to 10¾ percent, and the rates graduated upward to a rate of 16¾ percent on net income in the case of the largest corporations, with such classifications of business enterprises as the public interest may suggest. . . .

Upon the basis of our estimate of corporation incomes for the calendar year 1935, 182,000 corporations, or 95 percent of all of those expected to report net incomes for this year, would pay a smaller tax under such a schedule than under the flat rate now in effect.

It is apparent, therefore, that the proposal of the President in addition to producing additional revenue involves a redistribution of the corporation-tax burden by which 95 percent of all corporations obtain some tax relief, and about 5 percent, consisting of the largest corporations, would sustain an additional burden. Such a shifting of the burden would produce desirable results from many standpoints.

A weakness of our income-tax structure revealed by the depression is the violent fluctuation of government revenues resulting therefrom. It is apparent that if we can combine a tax based on ability to pay with increased reliance for revenues upon that class of corporations whose income is most stable, and decrease our reliance for revenues upon those corporations whose income shows the greatest fluctuation, we move in the direction of stabilizing the revenues and evening up fluctuations.

The Treasury statistics of income for 1932 show that the statutory net deficit of corporations of less than $50,000 of assets constituted 33 percent of their net worth, and that the percentage deficit was progressively smaller for each succeeding group of corporations, as shown below:

Asset Classes (in thousands of dollars)	*Percentage of Statutory Net Deficit*
Under 50	33.0%
50 — 100	14.0
100 — 250	10.0
250 — 500	7.6
500 — 1,000	6.9
1,000 — 5,000	5.7
5,000 — 10,000	5.1
10,000 — 50,000	3.8
50,000 and over	1.1

The National Industrial Conference Board also made a study of 1931 corporation-income tax returns and arrived at substantially similar conclusions.

The National Bureau of Economic Research on April 18, 1934, called attention to the fact that when corporations are grouped according to the value of their assets, no group earned an aggregate net profit in 1931 except the group whose assets exceeded $50,000,000. These concerns (not including subsidiaries) numbered only 632 out of the 381,000 corporations included in the study. But, with their subsidiaries, they owned more than 50 percent of the total assets reported by the 381,000 corporations—$155,000,000,000 out of $296,000,000,000. Further, the Bureau called attention to the fact that there was an impressive relationship between size of corporations and relative smallness of losses, the group of smallest corporations experiencing the greatest percentage deficit. The Bureau's study of these matters is summarized in the following table, which excludes corporations not reporting balance sheets:

Size of Corporations (Total net assets in thousands of dollars)	*Number of reporting corporations*	*Aggregate net profits after tax (in millions of dollars)*	*Aggregate net profits after tax, relative to total stock equity*
Under 50	182,447	415	21.7%
50 — 100	61,144	218	9.1
100 — 250	63,428	353	6.5
250 — 500	31,052	268	4.6
500 — 1,000	19,335	271	3.9
1,000 — 5,000	18,345	591	3.0
5,000 — 10,000	2,588	166	1.8
10,000 — 50,000	2,117	104	0.5
50,000 — and over	632	1,507	2.2

The Treasury, in the light of information now available, is of the opinion that the graduated income tax proposed by the President, which will base revenue yield more upon larger and less upon smaller corporations, would produce a more reliable, predictable and steady flow of revenue to the government than the present flat rate of tax for all. It also believes that such larger corporations are, by reason of their more stable revenues, better able to anticipate and bear the burdens than smaller corporations, whose incomes tend to fluctuate more erratically.

Concentration of Corporate Wealth

However, even though it is desirable to tax big corporations at a higher rate than little corporations, from a revenue point of view, the proposal would need examination as to its secondary consequences and as to the underlying economic conditions on which the proposal would operate.

Concentration of corporate assets in this country today can be determined with a fair degree of accuracy from Treasury statistics. In 1932, the number submitting balance sheets was 392,021, of which the reported total assets were $280,085,000,000. The degree of concentration of assets revealed is startling. Over 53 percent of the value of all

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assets owned by corporations in this country was owned by 618 corporations, constituting only 0.2 percent of the number of corporations. At the lower extreme the percentage of assets owned is equally significant. Of all American corporations, 67.6 percent held only 2.9 percent of the aggregate corporate assets. We find that 5 percent of the corporations owned 85 percent of all the wealth owned by corporations in 1932. The 5 percent owning the 85 percent of the corporate wealth and the 5 percent whose taxes would be increased are not necessarily identical, but most of the corporations in one class will also be found in the other. A table shows the distribution of assets among all corporations filing balance sheets with returns in 1932:

Assets class (in thousands of dollars)	*Number of returns*		*Total assets (in millions of dollars)*	
	Number in class	*Percent cumulated*	*Amount in class*	*Percent cumulated*
Under 50	206,477	100.0%	3,870	100.0%
50 — 100	58,320	47.3	4,153	98.6
100 — 250	59,500	32.4	9,414	97.1
250 — 500	28,422	17.3	9,988	93.8
500 — 1,000	17,590	10.0	12,289	90.2
1,000 — 5,000	16,705	5.5	34,432	85.8
5,000 — 10,000	2,442	1.3	16,857	73.5
10,000 — 50,000	1,947	.7	39,839	67.5
50,000 and over	618	.2	149,241	53.3

The Big Grow Bigger

We turn now to a study of the degree of concentration of net income reported by corporations for the year 1932. For this purpose, corporations that failed to have net profits are dropped out of the calculations and we have left, as the basis for the study, 73,291 corporations that reported a net profit and filed balance sheets with their returns.

Of all net income enjoyed by corporations during 1932, 50.4 percent went to 201 corporations, which represented only 0.3 percent of the number of corporations having some net income. On the other hand, 45 percent of such corporations are shown to have had less than 2 percent of the total income.

If we eliminate financial institutions, railroads and public utilities and other classes of business, and consider only manufacturing enterprises, we find a similar degree of concentration. Of the total wealth owned by corporations engaged in manufacturing, 64.4 percent was concentrated in the hands of 0.8 percent of the number of corporations classified in that field. Manufacturing corporations with assets of ten millions and over constituted only 1.2 percent of the total number of manufacturing corporations reporting net income, but this small group accounted for 63.3 percent of the aggregate compiled net profits of all manufacturing enterprises.

We find no evidence that a limit to the continued increase in corporate size has yet been reached, or that any real obstacle, economic or legal, to the continued concentration of corporate wealth has yet been created. By comparison between the figures for 1932 and those for 1926, we find that there was an increase in the concentration of corporate income. In 1926, 1.7 percent of the total number of corporations reporting net income accounted for 69.8 percent of the total of all corporations reporting net income. In 1932 it took only 1.1 percent of the total number of corporations reporting net income to account for 72.6 percent of the aggregate net income reported that year. The two years are not fully comparable and the figures therefore may reflect an increasing degree of concentration or they may simply be another evidence of the greater fluctuation in income on the part of the smaller-income group of corporations.

No condition is so favorable to corporate growth as profits. Profits both provide and attract capital. We may take the distribution of profits as a fair indication of prospects for growth. On that basis concentration and more rapid growth of the big companies in comparison with other companies would appear to be a probable continuing process of our economic life.

There is substantial evidence that the depression, because of the greater stability of the larger units, has hastened the concentration of the wealth owned by corporations—at least in some industries, and especially in finance. For example, on December 31, 1929, one of the largest industrial cities in the United States had 72 banks, 8 of which were controlled by the dominant banking interests of that community, and 64 of which were controlled by other interests. By December 31, 1933, the 8 banks owned by the dominant group had all survived, whereas the 64 competitors had been reduced, through closings and mergers, to 33—and of those, 20 corresponded or cleared through the dominant banks. During that period the percentage of capital and surplus reported by the dominant group of banks had increased 31 percent, while the percentage reported by their competitors within the city had decreased 38 percent. Deposits of the dominant banks increased 63 percent, and those of competing banks decreased 45 percent.

In the trade area outside of the same city, on December 31, 1929, 19 banks in 17 towns dominated by the same banking interests had 30 banks as competitors. By December 31, 1933, the dominant banks were all in business and the number of competing banks had decreased to 13. The proportion of bank capital and deposits under the dominant group had increased accordingly.

The social implications of these facts will be read differently according to the temperament, viewpoint and perhaps the interests of different observers. While it is probably debatable whether size has not often exceeded the requirements of efficient operation, and whether in fact it has not sometimes been accomplished at the expense of efficiency, there can be little doubt that the greater stability, on the whole, of large corporations is attributable to their many advantages over their smaller competitors; and these advantages are reasons why size provides a useful measure of ability to contribute to the cost of government. Some of the more obvious advantages are listed below:

1. As buyers of commodities and services, the large volume of their purchases gives the larger corporations a bargaining power that often results in price concessions that smaller concerns do not share.
2. Through widely distributed branch plants and warehouses, they are able to effect important savings in transportation costs, and to sell in a nationwide market.
3. Their large resources enable them to buy up important patents, often to pool these patents with

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those obtained by other large enterprises; and to carry on research programs, the fruits of which, while of public as well as private benefit, accentuate their competitive advantages over their smaller rivals.

4. In many cases large concerns have become of such dominating size that they are able to control the market and protect their profit margins.

5. Large corporations possess distinct advantages over their smaller competitors in the facility and cost of financing, for they are able to tap the large reservoirs of capital that are made available through the organized financial markets.

Effect of a Graduated Tax

The effect upon common-share earnings of the graduated tax is not subject to any fixed rule but would depend upon the capital structure of the particular corporation. All earnings available for preferred as well as for common stock are subject to tax, and the tax would usually be paid by the common stock alone, since the preferred stocks are normally entitled to a fixed return and the cost to common stockholders would therefore be greater in cases where preferred stock is outstanding. Also, in years of low earnings, the amount of the tax per share would be lower, and when no taxable earnings were reported no tax at all would be paid, of course.

We have taken, to illustrate the effect of this tax, the relatively high income year of 1930 and the common-stock earnings of five outstanding corporations in that year:

Corporation	*1930 reported earnings per share common*	*1930 earnings adjusted for 1934 tax rate*	*1930 earnings adjusted for graduated tax*	*Decline due to graduated tax*	
				Amount	*Percent*
A	$9.12	$8.93	$8.52	$0.41	4.6%
B	1.65	1.63	1.60	.03	1.8
C	8.08	7.91	7.54	.37	4.7
D	3.12	3.09	3.03	.06	1.9
E	4.46	4.41	4.30	.11	2.5

Treasury statistics show sources of income, such as dividends, and show the importance, relative to total income, of the various sources. The largest total amount of dividends reported as being received by any income class, according to the preliminary report for 1933, is that received by those under $5,000 of net income, but the relative importance of dividends to total income is least in this class, and the relative importance of dividend income is upon an ascending scale as we climb the income brackets. Thus to those with incomes of less than $5,000, dividends on the average contribute but 5.07 percent of their total, while 50 percent of the total net incomes over $1,000,000, is derived from dividends. The following table shows the relative importance of dividends and wages and salaries in various income groups (amounts are given in thousands of dollars):

Net income classes	*Total net income*	*Dividends on stock of domestic corporations*	*Percent of income*	*Wages and salaries*	*Percent of income*
Under 5	8,125,000	412,000	5.07%	5,407,000	66.55%
5 — 10	1,854,420	220,044	11.87	937,923	50.58
100 — 150	158,571	64,531	40.70	25,269	15.94
500 — 1,000	72,586	43,345	59.72	2,327	3.21
Over 1,000	99,015	50,284	50.78	2,761	2.79

Robert H. Jackson.

Washington Notes

Congress Makes a Fire-Alarm Exit—Anti-War Leaders Analyzed—Roosevelt's Soft Voice and Big Battleship

UP TO the time of the revolt staged by the cotton and wheat Senators, Congress moved toward adjournment with significant speed. Measures that had been debated for endless weeks flashed through the legislative machinery in seconds. Senator Glass arose to announce a conference agreement on the administration banking bill, a measure of immense potentialities, and before he could articulate his first word, Vice-President Garner declared that the report stood approved. Glass gulped, closed his mouth and sat down.

There was a reason for the frightened haste of Congress. The Democratic leaders, Robinson, Harrison, Byrns, Doughton and O'Connor, have many business friends. They had heard no cheers arise from the country in general after Mr. Roosevelt's fight for the death-sentence clause in the utilities bill, or after his announcement of his tax program. But they did hear insistent criticism from business circles, together with a steady demand that, for the sake of business, Congress should adjourn. The recent Rhode Island election seemed to them a corroborative portent. Some Democratic professionals went about Washington saying that every day Congress remained in session would cost them ten thousand votes. Even more important was their feeling that every day would cost ten thousand dollars in future campaign contributions from business. Two weeks ago they reportedly told the President that if Congress did not adjourn immediately he would find that he had a serious congressional rebellion to deal with. Although it meant sacrificing a number of his "must" bills, Mr. Roosevelt yielded—and then the revolt took place anyhow.

There was a period last week when Washington suddenly became a suburb of Paris. To the whole liberal wing in Congress, nothing seemed as important as the violent break-up of the Paris negotiations over Ethiopia. The beat of the war drums sounded increasingly near, coming up to the very steps of the Capitol. This uprush of feeling in Congress, in my opinion, was wholly spontaneous and unmotivated by hope of personal political advantage. It was a remarkable proof of the essential, almost religious, pacifism of the country or at least that part of it away from the Eastern seaboard.

Five men were revealed as the principal leaders in Congress against war—Senators Nye, Clark, Bone, Borah and Johnson. In estimating the country's future course, the depth of their pacifism is a factor of first importance.

The conspicuous preoccupation of Nye, Clark and Bone with peace is of recent origin, and begins with their service as members of the Senate munitions investigating committee. In the case of all three men, their conception of the problem of peace has been visibly colored by their experiences in the munitions investigation. The intrinsic horror of the trade and its scandalous profits led them first into a search for ways to do away with armament makers, rather than the war system itself. Many months were

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devoted to an attempt to make war a clean, patriotic, non-profit institution, and what they produced in the end came perilously close to resembling the mobilization plans of the complete fascist state. Only lately has the committee's emphasis swung away from improving war to preventing it.

In the Senate's committee on foreign relations, Borah and Johnson form a permanent, self-constituted subcommittee on neutrality. Where the ideas about peace of Nye, Clark and Bone have seemed to be groping and uncertain, theirs are clear and rigid. They propose that America have no commitments abroad of any kind, and that it resolutely keep out of other nations' quarrels. Whether or not you agree with them, there is something heart-warming about these two aging volcanoes, as there is about any familiar mountainous scenery.

The attitude toward neutrality and war of Secretary of State Hull is not simple to describe. Hull has said many friendly words about the League. He is pledged to the principle of collective action to preserve peace. He is immensely and rightfully proud of his share in ending the Chaco war through collective action. But beneath his internationalism, Hull cherishes a parochial patriotism not exceeded by any member of the administration. My guess is that secretly he believes that America represents the apex of human endeavor, and that the salvation of the world lies in its imitating us as closely as it can. Hull is a follower of Woodrow Wilson, and I think a very faithful one. In retrospect, it is impossible to escape the feeling that Wilson at Paris regarded the future League not merely as a world assembly, but as a world assembly that was to meet under American leadership to impose American capitalist democracy on all nations. In my judgment, Hull will be in favor of American intervention in Europe only when he has in his pocket the written promises of European nations to abandon fascism, communism, monarchies, import quotas, currency restrictions, bilateral trade agreements and all such un-American abominations. He is an apostle to the heathen who stays at home.

The enigma in the present situation is Mr. Roosevelt. Nominally, his policy toward war is contained in the statement made by Norman H. Davis on May 21, 1933, at Geneva, that this country would do nothing to nullify action taken by other states against an aggressor in the event we agreed that the aggressor was in fact guilty. While that statement does not mean our involvement in a European war, it is obviously no pledge against it. But there is doubt that it any longer represents Mr. Roosevelt's position. From what I have been able to learn, in his thinking Mr. Roosevelt has passed far beyond the problems now troubling the Senate group. He is unconcerned about war in Europe, and immensely worried about the Far East. During the Manchurian invasion, he was caustically critical of the moralistic note-writing of Hoover and Stimson, although it should be said that, on the basis of a common dislike of Hoover, he and Stimson cemented a beautiful friendship. Whether consciously or not, in his own administration he has followed the earlier Roosevelt's policy of walking softly and carrying a big battleship. Only once has he tried to bluff—when Japan, about a year ago, violated the principle of the Open Door—and when the bluff failed to work, he hastily dropped it. Meantime he has carried out his gigantic naval and air building program. If a European war comes, it is inconceivable that Japan will not move on China. The experts believe, and I think it is safe to say Mr. Roosevelt believes with them, that the question of what part we are to play in a European war will not arise. Our attention will at once be riveted upon Asia, where we shall have to decide what we want to do when Japan seizes the trade of the international settlement at Shanghai. Will California and Washington, home states of Senators Johnson and Bone, be as stoutly pacifist about Japan as they now are about Italy? We cannot reasonably hope that a European war will be postponed beyond 1940, which means that it will be in the power of Mr. Roosevelt, if reëlected, more than in that of any other man, to decide war and peace. All we really know of his pacifism is that no President has ever been so boyishly enthusiastic about the Navy. He likes boats.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Presidential Money Talks—The Stock Market Rises Unshriven—Whose Little Office Holder Are You?

FROM NOW until June 30, 1936, is just a little more than ten months. In those ten months Franklin D. Roosevelt has on hand $7,784,862,305.11 for emergency spending purposes. The eleven cents, probably, is the sum to be divided between Huey Long and Governor Talmadge. Of the emergency fund, $5,754,000,000 is in public works and relief funds of various kinds either unallocated or allocated and not yet spent. The other $2,030,000,000 is in the hands of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and can be loaned out to railroads, industry, government units, housing agencies or in any way the Corporation chooses. If the President wishes to put out all this money by the end of June, he will have to spend $778,000,000 a month or about twice as much as he has spent per month thus far. And if he does this, one may ask what Senator Borah or Senator Vandenberg or Ogden Mills, if nominated, will say to the people that will sound as eloquent or persuasive as those seven billions? The New Deal may have lost its literary writers and it may have lost its philosophic virtues. But it still has its money bags.

Our old friend, the stock market, has been showing signs of returning vitality. For four months and a half prices have been climbing in a most extraordinary manner. Rises of 100 percent in prices have been not uncommon and some have gone higher. In other words, you might have put your venturesome dollar in some of those stocks four months ago and doubled it. And, of course, you could have done even better had you played on margin, which you might have done with the greatest of ease with call money at one-fourth percent. The blessed old two-million-share day came back. And while all this activity took place in shares now priced at $2 and $10

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and $40 instead of $100 and $200 and $400 as in the grand days, nevertheless it gave an air to the exchange and the street and above all to the brokers. The spectacle was enough to convince anyone that the freezing experiment hadn't killed these particular monkeys.

But one wonders what would have happened down there if there were no Securities Act and no Securities Exchange Commission. Just how much effect did the Commission have on the course of trading? How much artificial activity was there to coax the public along? And if there was some, how is the Commission set to perceive it or run it down? Inquiry at the exchange brought the reply that there were no pools, no suspicious activity. But I recall that an inquiry there once before brought the assurance that there were no pools, and this happened to be just after those disgraceful operations in the alcohol stocks.

Perhaps we shall just have to wait a little longer and see a little more energy in the markets before we can tell just how much has been accomplished. We shall have to give the boys time to invent the necessary little comedies for getting around the various acts. But from this point on, once more, the markets will be an interesting spot to watch.

Occasionally some good soul does me the honor of writing me a letter informing me that I do not know what I am talking about. Or, perhaps, that I have committed some appalling inaccuracy. Usually such letters come from persons who work for some of the highly respectable corporations into whose behavior I manage to bump in the course of my wanderings. For instance, I once wrote that those perennial sons of liberty, the du Ponts, who can always be counted on to be around when the nation is in trouble, had expanded their preferred and common stock holdings in their company during the War from $29,000,000 to $86,009,199. An outraged reader wrote saying I had committed a shameful error and that the amount was $86,009,599.

In view of this pious devotion to accuracy, one cannot help wondering at the uncertainty and vagueness of some corporation men when they are asked questions by government investigators. The Federal Trade Commission recently put an employee of the Associated Gas and Electric System on the stand. He was listed as an employee of Utility and Financial Accountants—owned by the redoubtable Mr. H. C. Hopson. Counsel asked this witness —who may well be nameless—some questions about points that you might well suppose he could answer with alacrity. Here is the examination:

Q. Since 1932 have you been employed by any other corporation but that one?
A. Not to my knowledge.
Q. You would know it, would you not?
A. I should think so.
Q. I should too.
Q. Do you have any title?
A. I believe so.
Q. Don't you know?
A. Well, they have so many different titles in connection with the organizations that I am not sure what my title, in this particular one, is.
Q. Are you an officer of Utility and Financial Accountants?
A. I believe so, but I do not know the exact title.
Q. In view of your uncertainty about it, let us see if we can check against some of the positions we may expect to find in the company. You are not president, are you?
A. No, sir.
Q. Are you vice president?
A. I believe not.
Q. You are not sure?
A. No, sir.
Q. Are you secretary?
A. No, sir.
Q. Assistant secretary?
A. I may be.
Q. You are not sure?
A. I am not certain.
Q. Are you treasurer?
A. No, sir.
Q. Are you assistant treasurer?
A. I may be.
Q. Are you a director?
A. I believe not.
Q. Are you an officer of some other companies in the Associated System?
A. In the Associated System, yes; I believe so.
Q. Can you tell me approximately how many companies in the Associated System you hold office in?
A. No; I could not, offhand.
Q. Can you name two or three of the principal companies in which you are an officer?
A. I may be an officer of the Associated Gas and Electric Company.
Q. You may be. Don't you know?
A. I believe I am.
Q. What officer?
A. Assistant secretary or assistant treasurer, possibly.
Q. Possibly?
A. Yes.
Q. Is that as well as you can do for us?
A. Offhand; yes, sir.
Q. Can you name any other company in the Associated System in which you believe you may possibly be an officer?
A. No, I cannot.
Q. Not any of them?
A. Without looking the matter up, I could not definitely say.
Q. Do you occupy any position in Associated Securities Corporation?
A. Yes, sir.
Q. What?
A. Vice president.
Q. How long have you been vice president?
A. I really cannot say just when I was appointed an officer or appointed to that office. Previous to 1929, however.
Q. Were you vice president as early as January 5, 1929?
A. I believe I was.
Q. Who made you vice president?
A. I could not say.
Q. Do you hold any office in any other of the Hopson or the Hopson and Mange Corporations?
A. I could not answer that offhand.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

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Two Show Figures

"ALICE ADAMS" is a picture that will be remembered longer than it deserves, and all because it is designed not so much as a show as for purposes of elevation. It is the kind of picture that takes up a subject. What is more, it takes up a subject that a lot of people are very close to, because a lot of people have had doors slammed in their faces, usually when they were too young to know how to put their feet in them; and because they have practised in private all these pitiful little artifices, now made public.

The Adams girl lived on the wrong side of town. She didn't get to parties, pretended that she simply couldn't stand going; she pretended that holes in stockings were a perfectly delightful eccentricity, that she was having a perfectly ducky time. And she was completely miserable.

Now such painful subjects demand a great deal of delicacy and restraint in the treatment. And quite apart from delicacy of any sort, "Alice Adams" goes about slugging its points home by means of an assortment of devices that are only described with the beautiful economy of one word, which word is hokum. Take the dinner scene, where she has the boy in to meet the folks on a sweltering night: detail piling on detail, everything going wrong in the most stock manner, until the audience is all set for the shot where the old man's galluses drop his dress trousers down clear to the floor, revealing a pair of bright polka-dot drawers. The actual treatment, that is, seems a cross between harrowing tragedy and the honeymoon-breakfast routine in a Charley Chase.

Miss Katharine Hepburn, as the heroine of this romantic business (the screen, as a matter of fact, has chosen to keep the bitter-sweet edge of the thing, but rewrite it into a happy ending), has a curiously unsympathetic role, when you consider it. She tries to make a spread, she is terribly filled with cheap aspirations, and she makes poor Fred Stone—the part of the father, played with a good rough edge but an eye tending to slide off to the camera crew to see how they're taking it—she makes him miserable. She poses, she acts a spurious part, she cheats. All of which is human, well we know it; but it is not the nicest type of human. Miss Hepburn gets some real stuff out through all this—as when she steps out of the part she is playing into her own right, into these little breathless things, like the place where the boy says, meaning it now after the whole picture, I love you, and she says, in a soft-focus close-up, Gee *whiz,* she says.

And even in the midst of the faults to be found with her work, no one can doubt for a minute that Katharine Hepburn is one of the rare quick spirits to be seen anywhere, being in the last analysis one of those who can influence somewhat the world's conception of beauty in a woman. There has been exploitation before of this business of a boy's hips, the dress falling from them in a white clean line; and of this fine and evident carving in the bones of the head; and of these easy shifts of mood—tremulous, storming, suddenly lovely, etc. But Miss Hepburn has worked such qualities and mannerisms into a style, into something of her own that she herself has built and is true to. The trouble, particularly in this picture, is that the style is a restricted one, demanding certain special conditions for its best expression; and that anyway it is not a thickset style, but one that wearies quickly from overwork.

"The Little Minister" was a silly picture, made up from a silly Barrie play; but I had one feeling all the way through, and that was a feeling of being thrown in touch with something beautiful, like springwater. "Spitfire" was completely cockeyed as a story, and yet the part of the mountain girl as played by Miss Hepburn was so resilient, direct and near to some natural center, as to be a strange and rather lovely thing to watch. In "Alice Adams," though, Miss Hepburn is repeating the part-within-a-part routine of "Morning Glory," giving too much to a role that was lean to start with, being studied, overaccented, too girlishly much. All this hushed wonder and elfin verve of hers, used not as one means of expressing something felt but as a whole conscious method in itself—the tacit assumption being that this is enough for all purposes and may without regard be put to all purposes —this becomes in time a palpable set of habits, no more.

Miss Hepburn couldn't have made a good picture out of "Alice Adams"; but she shouldn't have made her performance in it simply a smudged copy of something that in time leaves open to easy jeers qualities that are essentially enough to take an ordinary person's breath away.

I meant to say of "Doubting Thomas" at the time it appeared that though its rewrite of "The Torch Bearers" seemed a terribly old pack of cards, there had been more aces shuffled into the comedy as a whole, in the way of people and high management, than might seem possible. It had a consistently better type of visual humor than I've seen for a long time, some of its pratfalls being as good as the slapstick of René Clair; it featured people like Sterling Holloway and Alison Skipworth; and it had a part for Will Rogers that was rather incidental and stodgy but nevertheless one of his best. And that is my reason for bringing it up at this time, to say a few words, intended before but delayed too long, about Will Rogers.

There was always a tendency to confuse Rogers with the national boobies to whom his frequent social pronouncements linked him. But he was in the first place a show figure; even in his worst things one could not help recognizing him as a very good one. And where his political views gained their weight with the populace of this country was from the character he had created of a typical American—a man in suspenders and stocking feet, unpretending, kind, bashful, not knowing about all these here new-fangled customs and ideas, but (and here is where he became the ideal of the type, rather than the type) disposing of them with native shrewdness, moving toward a final triumph over everything that was new or fancy or politically not right. Too homey and dependent on the old gags of faith in a simple world for comfort, there was still a certain common-man homeliness and goodness about him that everyone could see at once, a wholesome impatience with frippery and a running mumble of irony against it. In this created character he was a valuable property, just as he would be in real life, on a farm say, heckling the cows and squinting at the tarnal weather. He was one of the naturals of show business, and it is not pleasant to lose him.

OTIS FERGUSON.

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Knickerbocker Democrats

SIR: Your readers may be interested to know of the activities of the Knickerbocker Democrats in New York City. This group, working within the Democratic Party, has fought for the Lundeen Bill for Unemployment and Social Insurance; for the prevailing wage on work-relief projects; for adequate relief for the unemployed; for full protection of labor's right to strike and picket, and against the enactment of "gag" laws. It supported the anti-war demonstration of August 3, and approves the formation of a real labor party.

At present the Knickerbocker Democrats have candidates in the field in the Tenth Assembly district of Manhattan for Assemblymen and the Board of Aldermen.

Any of your New York readers interested in helping this group should communicate with it at 21 Bank Street, New York City.

EDWARD C. LITTLETON,
Chairman, Campaign Committee.

New York City.

Jobs for White Collar Workers

SIR: In his article, misleadingly entitled "Jobs for All" [The New Republic, July 10], Jonathan Mitchell asserts that it is "certain" that there "will be enough white-collar jobs" under the Roosevelt work-relief program, adding that the "white-collar 'employables' number about 300,000." Neither Mr. Mitchell nor the administration has offered substantial evidence that enough projects in addition to those now operating will be created to furnish employment to any appreciable number of the several hundred thousand white-collar workers on relief not heretofore employed on projects. Mr. Mitchell's previous statement that "essentially the new program is a means to enable Hopkins to *continue* [my emphasis] his F.E.R.A. projects" indicates what is actually intended—that existing projects will be continued with new funds. With 102,000 white-collar workers on relief in New York City (New York Times, April 14) and roughly 20,000 of these on work relief, Hopkins' promise to a visiting delegation that 60,000 jobs would be available allows no provision for the remaining workers, to say nothing of destitute thousands not on relief rolls for whom the administration has emphatically stated no jobs are intended. New York City's experience with projects (of which more have been retained through the organized protest of white-collar workers than elsewhere) furnishes no criterion for judging probable results in other cities, unless rapidly organizing professional and white-collar workers raise demands that will assure "enough white-collar projects." Was this what Mr. Mitchell meant?

Mr. Mitchell's assertion that the "white-collar 'employables' number about 300,000" is contradicted by Assistant F.E.R.A. Administrator Corrington Gill (New York Times, April 14), who says that "More than 750,000 experienced white-collar workers are on relief in this country . . . there should be no division of opinion on the necessity of providing work projects for these people," unless 60 percent of these are unemployable, which is inconceivable and not deducible from Mr. Gill's statement.

In discussing wages under this program Mr. Mitchell states that "In New York . . . 22 percent are white-collar workers, and will receive $94 (since New York is in the highest population category)." Is he so misinformed or naïve that he would have us believe that all 22 percent will be rated "professional or technical," the only rating promised $94 per month ($1,128 per year), in spite of Roosevelt's dictum that the "average per-capita expenditure" must not exceed $1,200 per year? Wage ratings for projects recently released by the E.R.B. in New York state that only "six percent of total cost of job" can be allotted for professional and technical workers, largely in such supervisory jobs as supervising accountant, supervising engineer and managing personnel supervisor. "Skilled" work at $85 per month with the "rate range" of $16.75 to $19.50 includes: dietician, journalist, physiotherapist. "Intermediate" work, including botanist, senior interviewer, newspaper man, social-service worker, translator, is promised $65 per month (range specified at $15 to $15.50).

Readers of The New Republic had a right to expect the uncovering of these attacks on professional and living standards, which have been hidden under the administration's publicity ballyhoo, in an analysis of a program that will affect the lives of millions of workers.

ALBION A. HARTWELL, Executive Secretary,
Interprofessional Association for Social Insurance.

New York City.

In Defense of the Doctor

SIR: I wish to take issue with Esther M. Douty, who writes of "Riding the Relief Rolls" in your issue of July 31. I know nothing of the other classifications, but I do know something of the "kind-hearted Dr. Wardley type" of whom she speaks so sneeringly.

Instead of suggesting that there is something wrong in the fact that the doctor is paid for his charity cases, why doesn't she say that at least in this one instance, a grave wrong is being righted? Why, in heaven's name, is it ever considered fair and right for the kind-hearted doctors to take care of the charity cases for nothing? My own father was that type, and I know from personal experience how he gave and gave and gave of his time and efforts, because he was too kind-hearted to let people suffer.

My father died some time ago, and so is not among the physicians she reviles for receiving just pay for their services, but I know many other splendid men of his type who would be in want today if it were not for the scant money received for charity cases. There are all too many people in the world who, like Esther M. Douty, seem to think it is not necessary for the doctor to be paid, and in times of depression he is the last on the list of creditors. . . .

MARION TUFTS PERKINS.

Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Extracts from Letters

JOSEPH P. SELLY, president of the Knickerbocker Village Tenants' Association, New York City, writes to protest against our editorial discussion of the dispute between the Association and the owners of the property in the issue of August 21. Mr. Selly denies that a rent strike "threatens," and says that none is contemplated at the present time. He denies that the apartments of leaders in the tenants' movement are being rented to other persons and informs us that the New York State Housing Board has promised to hold applications for these apartments in abeyance for the present. He particularly objects to the statement that "a Communist bloc has captured the K.V.T.A. and has made partisan use of the newspaper and the current-events club." He says this statement is utterly without foundation, pointing out that the K.V.T.A. is open to all tenants in Knickerbocker Village, regardless of their political views. The Tenants' Association feels that it is breaking important new ground by its policy, inasmuch as the federal government intends to spend many millions of dollars on public housing.

The Committee to Support Southern Textile Organization announces the formation of a Southern branch in North Carolina with Professor E. E. Ericson of the University of North Carolina as chairman. The Committee supports rank-and-file organizers in the Southern textile field and publicizes the living and working conditions found among the Southern textile-mill hands. More branches are sought to aid in the fight for a rank-and-file-controlled United Textile Workers' union in the South, and persons interested may obtain information by writing to the Committee to Support Southern Textile Organization, 304 West Fifty-eighth Street, New York City.

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Setting for Shakespeare

PEOPLE who know even a little about painters know them as a rule by galleries. The Venetians, for example—we are apt to know them all together. Tintoretto, the greatest of them, we do not know as some peak, single, complete, tremendous and deep. We see him almost automatically alongside Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, before him and contemporary; just as, also, we see him, among his followers, in the great El Greco, in whom sometimes the brush, the stress, the flight are almost indistinguishable from his master. The strange, half voluptuous and facile richness of Veronese—how like Shakespeare's poetry very often!—requires no special subtlety to be seen as both arising out of and moving toward the rest of Venice. I have not mentioned the Bellinis, Paris Bordone, Bassano, Carpaccio, Moroni, and a dozen others; nor have I listed, coming *diminuendo, diminuendo* out of greater forerunners, Tiepolo, Masaccio, Guardi, Canaletto and so on.

Literature, including dramatic literature, is a different thing, it would seem. Men have found it possible to contemplate Shakespeare as if he were a sudden solitary phenomenon, and to distort—it could never be lessened—his greatness by an ignorance of the mass of dramatic literature to which he belongs. " 'Twere to consider too curiously to consider so," as Horatio says; and yet the fact remains that Shakespeare is to the general not caviar but some entire, some total, apparition: he rises out of the earth. It is as if a Cadillac had suddenly evolved, or rather presented itself, without any preceding ventures or surrounding mechanics. At first glance, as the editors of this anthology[1] tell us in their preface, the present volume may seem to be a compromise, an unnecessary addition to the anthologies of English drama already published. It is a compromise, they admit. For they have attempted to present in a single volume representative plays from the beginning of drama in England to the closing of the theatres in 1642. In one book, that is, will be found examples of the early religious and folk plays, the morality and interlude, the early plays by court and professional authors, masques, the Elizabethan drama (exclusive of Shakespeare except as collaborator), and the Jacobean and Caroline drama.

I am afraid it would be straighter to say that this volume gives a fair set of plays outside Shakespeare, who is to be had complete in scores of cheap editions already. And yet, perhaps, that statement is not quite fair.

We have Marlowe, for example, setting forth the famous "mighty line," and lifting the history play to a new dignity, made permanent later on by Shakespeare. We have Thomas Kyd, who knew how to inject imagination—horror and dramatic excitement—into the ghost scenes that his Latin model, Seneca, had seen largely as rhetoric, and how to explore the melodramatic possibilities implicit in, or possible to, some of the old type-scenes. This is, furthermore, not to dwell on Kyd's introduction of the Machiavellian villain, to be so perfect later, nor on the plot devices that he provided Shakespeare. As a last wave from the Elizabethan sea, we have Shirley (1596-1666), with his forty recorded dramatic pieces, for a good contrasting example of a fair enough artist with certain fair enough qualities of smooth diction, skillful construction and a considerable balance. It is interesting to see Shirley in the midst of talents that proved too heady for him. Their plots, episodes, linguistics, tropes and situations recur in his plays. Like a mere academic dramatist, he can be both excessive and poised at the same time, and by never rising to any ultimate passion can prolong and redouble the fires.

Nevertheless it should be noted, in speaking of such a collection of dramas as this, that we must avoid the mistake of thinking that, in the case of these dramatists, all the lines that lead to Shakespeare lead upward. There is, for example, a certain mental passion in Marlowe that in Shakespeare got itself salted down to a plainer sanity as it became tinged with sheer ingenuity of image. And there is an audacity where Shakespeare might provide us only fancy. For what was almost scandalously beyond our human reach he would provide the gold sheen of ingenuity and wings. One of the directions in which Shakespeare, compared to any or all of the dramatists in this book, is superior lies in what we may call his proportionate scope. This, of course, is only one of his points of superiority. And yet it is worth nothing, among various other points, the extent to which, for instance, Ford, in such a play as " 'Tis Pity She's a Whore," wrote with a distinct theory, and in his thesis of the whiteness of a soul in spite of the pollution of the body that envelops it, moved toward the drama of the modern theatre. And Ford's conception of the tragic conflict in drama stretched beyond the mere rank grapple of good with evil; it posited a theory of the tragic struggle between the relative good and the more nearly absolute good.

One of the almost constant traits in these Elizabethan dramatists is that they write by scenes. The whole play is not continuously considered or built. This is a fact too obvious to dwell upon. We have instances of it even in Shakespeare and not at all infrequently. This, in one sense, is only another way of saying that these Elizabethans were not civilized; they had often the splendors without the order and oneness. The central core of their art tends toward the individual, private and infinite. For the most part they are individual and barbarous; hence the ease with which they drop from plane to plane, at one minute all divine and soaring image, at another mere bombast and banality.

At the end of the collection of thirty-one items, as they say, are added Plautus' "Miles Gloriosus" and Seneca's "Thyestes." This is an excellent scheme. It provides for laymen an immediate chance to compare the English with the Latin sources—made more eminent by the loss of the Greek originals—and it enables them to observe close at hand the relation of English tragedy to Seneca—not to Euripides, his main source. They will see that Seneca, in imperial Rome, was not so obsessed with action as were the Elizabethans, nor with tumultuous plot and artifice; but at the same time they will trace to this classic source a great deal of the rhetoric, Polonius-spouting, hectoring and verbal pomp of which the Elizabethans were so proud and we so faint.

STARK YOUNG.

[1] The English Drama: an Anthology of Early English Plays, Edited by Edd Winfield Parks and Richmond Croom Beatty. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 1,495 pages. $5.50.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Oregon Trail

HONEY IN THE HORN"[1] is such an extraordinarily good book that you are puzzled to say why it isn't better. The scene is Oregon thirty years ago, in the homesteading and railroad-building period. A knob-jointed boy of sixteen has to leave Shoestring Valley, in the high Cascades, on account of knowing too much about a jailbreak. He rides along with a horse trader's outfit bound south to the hop fields, then wanders on to the seacoast north of Coos Bay, where he lives with the horse trader's daughter in a cabin lashed by winterlong gales. Early in spring the boy and the girl join a caravan of homesteaders who plan to settle in the dry lava country east of the mountains. They quarrel, they lose each other for a year of lonely adventures, they are reunited in the midst of another caravan, this time composed of homesteaders starved and frozen out of their homesteads and trekking back to get jobs on the new Harriman railroad. But the author isn't primarily interested in Clay Calvert and his girl Luce. Their adventures are merely a framework on which he can nail, hog-tie or loosely lean all the strange characters and wild landscapes to be found in backwoods Oregon.

H. L. Davis was born in Oregon, grew up there on a homestead, worked there as printer's devil, sheep herder and sheriff. He has the feel of the country in his bones; he speaks its language; he treats the people with an affectionate disregard, as if he were writing about own-headed uncles and shiftless cousins. As a story teller, he belongs to the same type as Peg Leg Simmons' oldest son, who "could take the measliest little episode that had happened to him and string it out and wool it around and supple it and driddle it along for hours as joyful and preoccupied as an old squaw tanning a stolen buckskin." But unlike Flem Simmons, he doesn't bore us with a "most infernal rigamarole of particulars that had no purpose whatever except to keep Clay and the Indian boy from squabbling." The particulars he keeps bringing in—eagerly, hurriedly, as if there would never be time to tell the half of them—all have to do with Oregon folkways, fights, cooking, crops, animal husbandry, wildflowers, trees, smells, weather; and they end by giving shape and life to the whole backwoods country.

Here is Shoestring Valley after an equinoctial storm:

> The centered flood waters of the river were brindled intensely black and throbbing gray and blinding silver, and they piled and foamed and hell-roared through the motionless meadows like a wild train making up time through a country where everybody was asleep.

Here is a sample of the stories told at the station where Clay Calvert herded sheep. Somebody asks what Peg Leg Simmons died of:

> "He overet," said Orlando Geary. "There was a barbecue and shootin' match down the river a piece, and he got to feelin' good and bet his team and rig that he could outeat any two men in the crowd. So he did. I was one that eat against him and we didn't give up till we'd made him stretch himself. He like to busted before they could get him home. I never to this day seen a man come so close to eatin' a whole steer without any help. Afterwards I went over and laid him out. He was clear-headed up to his last breath, and admitted that he oughtn't to have talked such foolishness at his age. Pomp and vanity had been his downfall, he said. He was about seventy-odd then."

The rhythm here is the rhythm of backwoods speech; the humor is that of a man in blue overalls sitting on his heels at the end of a corn-row, cutting another slice of tobacco from the plug and telling about the cowboy who lost his wife—"She was a good woman and I was mighty sorry when she broke her leg and I had to shoot her"—it is the humor of the impossible cruel anecdote, the tall tale. "Honey in the Horn" takes us back to an old type of American writing, that of Mark Twain's early stories, with a touch of Davy Crockett's autobiography. It reveals by contrast the falseness and Fourth-of-July hurrah-boys eloquence of books like "John Brown's Body" and "American Song." Unlike Paul Engle, Mr. Davis never talks about "the American soul" or "the unique American dream of the common man:" he shows the unique American dream in action; he shows common Americans starving, fighting and talking big on the frontier. It is heartening to think that any book so earth-stained, colt-wild and uproarious should have won the Harper prize. Yet the fact remains that the plot is inadequate, that the general conception is lacking in drama, that the two principal characters are unappealing and unrevealed in action. For just what reason, you wonder, does the author go astray?

I think there are two clues to be found in the very brief note that takes the place of a preface. First, Mr. Davis says "there is no intention anywhere in the book of offering social criticism or suggesting social reform." Second, he explains that he had originally hoped to include "a representative of every calling that existed in the state of Oregon during the homesteading period." He had to give up this idea, out of consideration for his readers, but "within the limits set me I have done my best."

The first point reveals a curious misconception on the part of the author. Actually the book abounds in social criticism—of frontier agriculture and cooking, of cruelty toward the Indians, of land speculation, of dishonest politicians. It suggests many minor reforms that would improve rural housing and prevent the abuse of grazing and water rights. It is fundamentally a social, a collective novel, with the hero and heroine shown as representatives of their class, completely overshadowed by the migrations in which they take part. The final episode is the birth of a social consciousness in the two former outcasts, Clay and Luce; the last remark is an expression of their group solidarity: "Go on, show those bush settlers that our men know how to handle horses."

The real meaning of Mr. Davis' first point is that he has avoided, obscured and neglected those parts of his subject where social criticsm would be embarrassing. The years of which he writes were an age of turmoil in Oregon. They were years when the best of the public lands were being grabbed by the Hill and Harriman railroads and the Weyerhaueser mills, years when little homesteaders were shot in the back for the crime of settling in rich timberland—years, too, when printer's devils were talking

[1] Honey in the Horn, by H. L. Davis. New York: Harper and Brothers. $2.50.

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about a new group of radical laws called the Oregon Plan, and strikes were brewing, and lumbermen were being organized with harvest hands into one big union. Mr. Davis omits all this controversial material and thereby loses half the drama of his subject. Looseness and laziness in political thinking are connected here with weakness in artistic form. By refusing to consider characters in their historical context, the author leaves them episodic and one-sided. By refusing to visualize the general course of events, he deprives his social novel of a plot.

In the absence of a plot—that is, of a central conflict—he has to find something else that will justify the aimless wanderings of his hero. Information replaces drama—or at any rate I take this to be the meaning of his second point, about including a representative of every calling that existed in the state. A novelist would include only the callings needed for his story. What Davis has produced, with infinite love and humor and richness of image, is a biographical and topographical dictionary of Oregon in 1908; his novel is still to be written.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

Among the Lunatics

Asylum, by William Seabrook. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 276 pages. $2.

BECAUSE for more than two years William Seabrook had been tipping the jug to the extent of almost two quarts of hard liquor every day, and couldn't stop doing it, he had himself legally committed to one of the largest and oldest insane asylums in the East. He stayed there for seven months and was keenly attentive to everything that went on about him, and to everyone—whether patient, doctor or attendant—with whom he came in contact.

Since, aside from acute alcoholism, Mr. Seabrook was completely sane and since he did not want to escape but to stay and be cured, his account of his incarceration differs from that of the harassed and hallucinated who regard asylums as hells invented for their own particular torment. And because he is an accomplished spinner of adventure yarns, he does not have to overload his story with that impressive but almost unintelligible terminology to which psychiatrists always resort when speaking of their practice. His story is that of a normal man who, on account of unusual circumstances, finds himself in a fascinating environment of which most normal men know little.

To him the asylum was a goofy, but neither a terrifying nor a distressing place, for the treatment of mental maladies has changed materially as well as psychically during the forty years since Clifford Beers in a strait-jacket planned to escape through suicide the hell to which his family had innocently committed him. In Mr. Seabrook's asylum there were no strait-jackets (now, as Seabrook points out, they wind a person tightly in wet sheeting), and no padded cells. Even the iron bars at the window were disguised as modernistic grill work; the atmosphere was not that of a jail, but of a cross between a kindergarten and a college fraternity house. And because he took his sanity, his common sense and his sense of humor with him into this not unpleasant place, he has been able to write of his fellow inmates not as terrified and pitiable outcasts, but as interesting and often amusing companions. Thus his book is something new in the history of psychiatry—a story of a nut-house which is objective and human and, for that very reason, entirely credible.

GRACE ADAMS.

Overland Reporter

America Faces the Barricades, by John L. Spivak. New York: Covici, Friede. 287 pages. $2.50.

IT IS a relief to get some news about America. New Yorkers are kept much better informed about the state of mind this week in Abyssinia, about what is happening today in Moscow, in Madrid, than they ever get to be about the great Pacific Northwest or the Ozarks or the Cotton Belt. They get exhaustive interpretative articles about every place in Europe, and these articles are written by intelligent men, while those who write the pieces for the back-page Sunday sections about Dallas, Denver and St. Paul are usually either hack deskmen, or have been retired from their home-town papers on account of age and partial blindness.

So that when a purge occurs in Germany everyone understands it and has almost predicted it, but when a general strike is called in Terre Haute, people are astounded. And when an Erskine Caldwell or a John L. Spivak actually does go out and look on his America, the act itself is so unusual that it's a sensation. Most people were astounded at the news of the San Francisco general strike and yet, as Spivak shows, all the conditions to produce a general strike existed in San Francisco for months before it was called.

New York is seething with the questions: When is the revolution coming? When, if ever, are the fascists coming? And no one thought of going and finding out. Spivak simply took a train and went around America and asked a lot of questions. The fact that he is about the best reporter in America helped a lot. Also the fact that he didn't go to interview the big shots. Or rather he did try that, but he found complete bewilderment.

The big shots wanted the government to help them in their business. They didn't want the government to meddle in their business. They wanted prices lowered so they could lower wages; but they didn't want their own prices lower because that would ruin their business. Spivak talked to A.F. of L. leaders and found that, like all office-holders, they loved their well paid jobs. He talked to Secretaries of Chambers of Commerce and discovered they knew all about the swampy lands around their towns, lovely for new factories to be built upon, but didn't know the number of people on relief.

Spivak talked to workers and to the unemployed. No, they did not want any revolution and they hated Reds. They had seen a lot about Reds in the papers. They wanted living wages and they didn't want to be so speeded up that when they knocked off work for the day they were too tired even to fall asleep. They hoped the President would look out for them, but if he didn't, well, they were going to eat. If that was revolution, well, call it revolution. And if the Reds were going to help them, then hurrah for the Reds. Spivak found that on the edge of the struggle, ready to help deflect hatred to Communists and Jews, while they themselves fed upon the dying system, were a lot of enthusiastic and not yet quite professional fascist organizers, who were slowly losing their amateur standing.

Few wanted revolution and few wanted fascism, but all of them somehow felt "we are in for a period of great unrest, organized and unorganized revolts and bloodshed." And, "when the government can grant no more concessions to appease its hungry, then revolt on a national scale will be inevitable."

NATHAN ASCH.

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Where Fiction Falters

A World to Win, by Jack Conroy. New York: Covici, Friede. $2.50.

IN A FIGHTING article ("Down with the Novel") Robert Forsythe decried the novel as "that horrifying specter which haunts the dreams of young authors and turns prospective artists into verbal machinists," and urges those proletarian writers who aren't natural novelists to write autobiography or invent a new literary medium that will allow them the freedom they need. Had he considered the case of Jack Conroy he might have been even more vehement. "The Disinherited," Conroy's first book, was better autobiography than it was a novel. While many of the situations were presented in a loose, episodic manner, the total effect was vigorous and stimulating. We were ready to agree with his publishers that Conroy was no mere literary gent but a born story teller who knew the American proletariat as few writers did.

In "A World to Win" he abandons the free and easy manner of "The Disinherited" and, with a self-consciousness that makes him strut and stumble, drags in all the trappings of the "novel." The result is a clumsy pattern that seriously strait-jackets his style. His main characters are two step-brothers—one a worker and the other a would-be writer—who arrive at communism by different routes. Robert Browning Hurley (christened by a romantic mother who wanted him to be a poet) experiences the esthetic sterility of the present system from his contacts as a university student among dry intellectuals, and from his own confused reactions to life about him. Leo, six years his senior, becomes aware of capitalism's economic insecurities through the heartbreaking drudgeries that he and his disinherited family (a wife and five children) suffer. Robert Browning Hurley is poor material for Conroy, who frequently fumbles around with him, as though he were not sure in his own mind what such a character might do next. The author does a much better job when he is dealing with Leo, for as soon as he begins to write of workers and their associations his style seems natural and his psychology authentic most of the time. For all of its virtues and good intentions, "A World to Win" makes dull reading.

JERRE MANGIONE.

Joffre vs. Moltke

The Campaign of the Marne—1914, by Sewell T. Tyng. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. 426 pages, with 20 maps. $3.75.

THE SUBJECT of this book is not merely the battle of the Marne, in the narrower sense, but the entire first phase of the Great War on the western front, beginning with the invasion of Belgium and ending with the Marne and the German retreat. This first and briefest phase of the War, like its last phase in 1918, is crowded with stirring events and culminates in a sudden turn of fortune. In the hands of skillful writers, it has lent itself readily to the production of powerful dramatic effects. These, obviously, were not the effects aimed at by Mr. Tyng. His purpose was rather to produce a careful, methodical, unbiased, purely military study, based on the most thorough research, and he fulfills this purpose admirably. His exposition is direct and clear. He lays bare a most complicated course of events, so that even the layman can follow him with the aid of the maps. The thoroughness of the research is attested—aside from the internal evidence furnished on every page—by the list of books cited in this work, which covers nearly seven pages. This is something very different from the ordinary bibliography, which can be compiled from a library catalogue.

A work so crowded with detail cannot be summed up in a brief review. One can only advert to a few salient points. The Franco-German frontier was powerfully fortified on both sides. Maneuver was practically excluded. To circumvent the insuperable obstacle, the Germans had the Schlieffen plan, which aimed at turning the French fortified zone by a march of the most powerful wing of the German army, its right, through Belgium. (The original plan also included a march through the Dutch province of Limburg.) A much smaller force was considered sufficient to resist an attempted French advance through Lorraine and Alsace. Whatever may be said against this plan from a political or, if you prefer, a moral standpoint, from a military point of view it was irreproachable. On the other hand, the French went into the War with the so-called Plan XVII, which, like all its predecessors, aimed at a direct break-through in the German fortified zone. The disadvantage was enormous, incalculable. The Germans were also stronger in other respects. The two armies were nearly equal numerically, but as the Germans had a much larger population to draw upon, their army contained a larger proportion of vigorous young men. They also had an advantage in the heavier type of field artillery, and their superior field officers seem, on the whole, to have been abler, more resolute, and better prepared for actual warfare. After the first two or three weeks of the campaign, Joffre found it necessary to replace a number of division, corps and army commanders with better men. However, the heaviest French handicap was their plan of campaign.

Fortunately for the French, the execution of the Schlieffen plan fell into weak hands. Fearing to yield territory, even temporarily, in Alsace and Lorraine, Moltke strengthened the left and center at the expense of the right. The left and center were victorious in a series of battles; to make the victory complete, they were still further strengthened. Likewise, two entire army corps originally destined for the right were diverted to the Russian front. The German high command began to play with the idea that, after all, the decision might be won in the center. On the other hand, as the danger of an enveloping movement from the north began to loom, Joffre shifted troops from the fortified zone of the south to the open north, tentatively at first, then in ever greater masses. A new army was formed near Paris, to the west of the German right. This regrouping of the French armies amounted in effect to a second mobilization, accomplished while the armies were engaged and the center was in retreat. Thus was brought on the first battle of the Marne—a strategic, hardly a tactical victory. The German plan had failed, but the Germans were nowhere decisively beaten; most of their armies still maintained the offensive; and when the northern group of armies received the order to retreat, the striking power of the French had become so reduced, that there was practically no pursuit, and the Germans were able to entrench on territory which they occupied to the end of the War. One can only speculate on what might have happened if the French had started out with a sensible plan of campaign. But the conclusion is inescapable that the Marne was a victory of Joffre over Moltke, of the French general staff over the German.

HERMAN SIMPSON.

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Platform for Psychology

Principles of Gestalt Psychology, by Kurt Koffka. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 731 pages. $6.
The Frontiers of Psychology, by William McDougall. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 250 pages. $2.
Gestalt Psychology, by George W. Hartmann. New York: The Ronald Press Company. 343 pages. $3.50.

NO ONE who reads these books can say that psychology has gone to seed. Although they do not present many novel ideas, or a united front, each carries the undertones of a new deal in scientific thought and theory. Each, in its way, is a reaction against "naïve materialism." In each there is emphasis upon meanings and values as against atomic abstractions. In all there is a platform for future progress.

Koffka continues the elaboration of *Gestalt-theorie*. Hartmann's history and exposition of Gestalt psychology will be a boon to American students; it is the most readable and lucid statement of the Gestalt point of view now available in the English language. McDougall discusses the role of psychology in its relation to the other sciences. In his account, psychology no longer trails meekly in the rear guard of the "exact" sciences or stands aloof from other sciences that deal with the activities of men. The physical and biological sciences on the one side, and the social sciences on the other, are joined by a region that is common to both: in this region lie the "frontiers" of psychology.

Koffka and McDougall both take issue with those scientists who consider man as a material organism only. According to McDougall, science is founded upon teleology. "Even the physicist in all his glory remains an anthropomorph," and so, of necessity, do all scientists. Their interpretations must come through the medium of their experiences of nature, and in this experience the whole human personality is involved.

McDougall cites Eddington's assertion that there is something wrong in the fundamental conceptions of physics, and suggests that the defect may lie partly in its inadequate psychology. Historians, he also points out, are beginning to see that the forces with which they are concerned are "mental forces, the desires and mental activities of men." The appraisal of economic trends, and the formulation of economic theories of value, likewise must lean heavily upon psychological understanding and research.

These points merely suggest some of the frontier areas discussed in McDougall's book. In outlining factors to consider in studying these areas he stresses the role of human propensities and sentiments. In passing, he gives an analysis of the manner in which inadequate theories of value have come into being in the field of economics, and have a strong influence on world affairs. In treating the theory of progress, which he does at length, he maintains that it is essential to accept the Lamarckian principle of the inheritance of acquired characteristics. His reaction against atomism has points in common with the position of Gestalt psychology, but his epistemology differs in many respects. He advances the correspondence theory of truth: scientists can never ascertain absolute truth; their propositions can be verified only by the pragmatic method, by putting them to the test and by treating them as working hypotheses.

Koffka's mission in writing his book, he asserts, is to take issue with a cultural force he calls "positivism." Positivism rests on "the dogma that all events are equally unintelligible, irrational, meaningless and purely factual," and that no event is intrinsically orderly and meaningful. Such a view he feels constrained to attack because it is "utterly inadequate" and all the more since "its hold over our generation is strong."

A familiar aspect of Gestalt psychology, as the reader perhaps knows, is its objection to the analysis of behavior into discrete and "elementary" units. The mental life cannot be explained in terms of independent psychic units that somehow have become organized into larger wholes. In perception, for example, we directly perceive wholes, in which parts are embodied in dynamic, intrinsic relationship. The whole is qualitatively different from a mere summation of its parts. Matter, life and mind—and the corresponding categories of quantity, order and meaning—do not represent different realms. The gap between physical and behavioral processes (including conscious process) is bridged by Wertheimer's principle of *isomorphism*, the principle that behavioral and underlying physiological processes are structurally the same.

In his introduction, Koffka speaks of a difference in the "intellectual climate" of Germany and the United States. In German thought, he maintains, the idealistic tradition is strong; meanings are more important than facts. In the United States the climate is chiefly practical, colored by "positivism"; there is an overvaluation of mere facts, and "an aversion sometimes bordering on contempt, for metaphysics which tries to escape from the welter of mere facts into the loftier realm of ideas and ideals." To avoid the accusation of mysticism, writers on Gestalt at first stressed least the concept of *significance* or *meaning* which was an important aspect of their system.

Many will see much truth in Koffka's criticism of American psychology. More time is spent in collecting facts than in philosophizing about them. But many psychologists will contend that the danger of too much philosophizing is a good deal more serious than the waste motion that results from too little. A stronger addiction to facts than to theories at least helps to safeguard research from becoming merely the instrument of preconceptions. It is a significant commentary on the American attitude that much of the research that has contributed heavily to a revision of prominent behaviorist doctrines has come from psychologists reared in the very cradle of behaviorism.

The foregoing gives only a glimpse or two of Koffka's book, which includes a wealth of new material. It would be considerably less difficult to read if it contained a glossary and a pointed summary of the concepts advanced in each chapter. Generalizations are often interwoven with subsidiary illustrations and proofs.

Hartmann's well written "Gestalt Psychology" will do much to promote the understanding and usefulness of its subject in American research. He is sympathetic towards the school, but he has none of the blind fervor of an evangelist. He gives a balanced account of the historical antecedents, of the relation to Gestalt of other contemporary scientific developments, of the varieties of Gestalt theory, and of criticisms that have been raised. This school of thought has been somewhat slow in making a wide impression in America. It has been handicapped by the inertia of old ideas, the heavy and often forbiddingly metaphysical quality of its writings and, to some degree, by a mistaken notion that it represents only a theory of perception. It may be said that the Gestalt psychologists themselves have been tardy in applying their principles to concrete problems that to many seem more vital than the topic of perception.

The influence of Gestalt is growing, and it is destined to have a profound effect upon American psychology. Numerous independent findings in psychology, as well as in

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other scientific fields, have helped to stimulate a more receptive attitude toward the Gestalt point of view. Its sponsors may justly complain, however, that a large body of American teachers and writers still fail to take account of Gestalt principles.

The fathers of Gestalt may find points in Hartmann's book that they would like to revise or supplement in certain details, but the author is to be commended for having avoided a form of writing that prevents the reader from seeing the forest for the trees. ARTHUR T. JERSILD.

The Dark Man's Burden

The Story of an African Chief, by Prince Nyabongo. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 312 pages. $3.

THE ROMANTICIZED White Man's Burden—which in sober fact has always rested rather heavily on native shoulders—is sufficiently familiar to white readers. Here for almost the first time the story is told by one of its supposed beneficiaries. There are only one or two other books by educated Africans who know from personal experience both primitive and "civilized" ways. Prince Nyabongo compares and appraises these ways with considerable objectivity, humor and charm.

The story of the young Bugandan chief, Stanley Mujungu, is told from the point of view of the native ruling class. His father was a chief of progressive tendencies who named his favorite son for the white explorer, despite the headshaking of conservative tribal elders. Imbued with the traditions and policies of the tribe, he had also an open-minded readiness to test the ways of the white man and adopt such of them as were good. To know which of these ways were in fact good for the tribe, to reconcile white preaching with white practices, to weigh these practices against others that seemed to the African mind far more logical and expedient—to do all this was no easy matter.

Prince Nyabongo, reacting against centuries of civilized white arrogance, has perhaps weighted the scales a little in favor of native ways. It is difficult at times not to suspect him of pulling the reader's leg, particularly when he selects as the protagonist of civilization the Reverend Hubert, whose mission school Mujungu attended and who is repeatedly confounded by the latter's mother wit, sound reasoning and occasional malice. The narrative of the running skirmish between these two is highly entertaining and plausible, but seems at times a trifle too pat in its turning of racial tables. In certain respects, also, its candor seems to me more apparent than real. There are aspects of Bugandan life about which I remain almost as puzzled as Chief Ati was by the Reverend Hubert's explanations. Mujungu, we learn, was expelled from the Reverend's school for writing a tender and poetic love letter to his girl—an act he defended by saying they were engaged. But the reader has barely heard of any such girl before and never does again, and in the end, Mujungu merely inherited his father's young widows, according to tribal custom. Having also inherited the chief's progressive tendencies, he sent all but one of the wives away to set his subjects the example of monogamy. This immediately brought him into difficulties with the primitive Mrs. Grundy. So though "he still believed . . . in his reforms . . . he thought it best to slow them up. The first thing he planned to do was to get a few more wives—three or four at least. Then he might have some peace to carry out his plans."

MARTHA GRUENING.

Books in Brief

The Doctor's Bill, by Hugh Cabot. New York: Columbia University Press. 329 pages. $3.

IN THIS carefully documented volume by one of the senior surgeons of the famous Mayo Clinic, the economic and social problems of the physician are analyzed with satisfying honesty. Dr. Cabot has assembled much valuable material on the medical resources of the United States (which are exceptionally good), and has shown how inadequately they are used. Chapters on group health insurance in various European countries, on the income of physicians, the cost of medical care, industrial medicine, the role of the specialist and the knotty problem of "Laissez Faire or Compulsion," lead up to the final question, Where do we go from here? Dr. Cabot has no clear-cut answer, preferring to rest his case for the adoption of some form of socialized medicine upon the weight of the evidence and the experience of other countries. Those who seek, or have, an answer, will find his book worth studying.

H. W.

The First Bus Out, by Eugene Löhrke. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. $2.

Although the theme of this novel is not startlingly original (one is likely to recall Sutton Vane's play, "Outward Bound," which dealt with the same general idea), Mr. Löhrke has written a story of the supernatural that barely misses technical perfection. His strangely assorted group of characters, which include an opera singer, a tramp, a disillusioned esthete and a gangster, have boarded the same bus, although bound for such widely divergent points as Washington and Salzburg, in Austria. Each is convinced that he or she is on the right bus and that the others are maniacs. How they are brought to realize that their destination, eternity, is a common one, is told with considerable skill and effectiveness, and one regrets that Mr. Löhrke resorted to such a melodramatic artifice as having the bus operated without a driver. L. B.

California Joe, by Joe E. Milner and Earle R. Forrest. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers. 396 pages. $3.

The West, responding to the wave of sectionalism, is producing its quota of books about local heroes. These books betray the blending of national types, for they usually have a mint-julep gusto and a Yankee-schoolmarm precision. Earle R. Forrest, a student of Western history, has aided Joe E. Milner in recounting the career of Milner's grandfather, who was known as "California Joe" chiefly because his name was Moses Milner. He went west as a youth and traveled there widely. He was with Doniphan in Mexico, with Kit Carson at the battle of Adobe Walls and with Custer at the battle of Washita; he was conceded to be a better rifle-shot than his friend Wild Bill Hickok. This life illustrates the pageantry of the West exceptionally well, and is so carefully documented that even a tenderfoot can follow the trail. J. G.

The Wild Earth's Nobility, by Frank Waters. New York: Liveright, Inc. $2.50.

Frank Waters' book, "The Wild Earth's Nobility," is a fictionalized history of the town of Colorado Springs, but the author has also a thesis. He feels that this Rocky Mountain section, because of its aridity and scenic grandeur, is a land to be propitiated, but never conquered, and

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points out how the various Indian tribes have been molded by this environment that dwarfs human passions. The hero of the book is inarticulate and characterized by an aloofness that makes him feel an exile. He is a carpenter who prospers as a contractor and keeps out of the mad gamble of silver mining, because his temperament is not in sympathy with get-rich-quick dreams. Though he eventually succumbs to the lure of gold, his desire is not so much to get rich as to vanquish the mysterious mountain—he has something of the spirit in which Captain Ahab sought the White Whale. But this vein of allegory is less rewarding to the reader than are the author's pictures of the types that gave color to early Colorado. J. G.

New Pioneer Story Book, edited by Martha Campion. New York: New Pioneer Publishing Company. 110 pages. 25 cents.

These twelve little tales, by as many different authors and all reprinted from The New Pioneer magazine, are intended as an antidote to that "poison" which children habitually absorb through reading of the poor little girl whose humility captivates Prince Charming and the poor boy who grows up to marry his boss's daughter. The tough and wily heroes of these stories, whether in Russia, Germany, Cuba or the farms and factory towns of America, have less romantic but equally astounding and even more satisfactory adventures. They sass their teachers, fool the cops, outwit the scabs and, by their cunning, persuade whole regiments of soldiers to disobey their officers. Unfortunately the literary quality of the book falls considerably below the attractiveness of its design and illustrations. G. A.

Contributors

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS, associate professor of Anthropology in Northwestern University, has traveled extensively in Africa and recently made a field trip to Dutch Guiana.

FRANCES HERSKOVITS is the wife of Melville J. Herskovits and accompanies him on his field trips, assisting in the recording and translating of native music and poetry. She collaborated with her husband on a book, "Rebel Destiny," describing their adventures in Dutch Guiana.

ALBERT MAYER is a New York architect and authority on housing who has acted as consultant in housing for various governmental agencies.

LIONEL WIGGAM is twenty years old, a student at Northwestern University. His verse has been published in Poetry, Harper's Magazine, The Atlantic Monthly and The Nation.

GRACE ADAMS is the author of "Psychology: Science or Superstition" and "Your Child Is Normal."

NATHAN ASCH, New York novelist and critic, recently made a tour of America. His new novel, "The Valley," is being published this month by Macmillan.

HERMAN SIMPSON was formerly editor of the Socialist daily, The New York Call, and has been for many years a student of economic and military history.

ARTHUR T. JERSILD is associate professor of Education and research associate of the Child Development Institute at Teachers' College in Columbia University.

MARTHA GRUENING, former field research secretary for the Association for the Advancement of Colored People, is a student of race relations in the United States.

The initials signed to the brief reviews are those of Harold Ward, Lawrence Bell, Joe Gould and Grace Adams.

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